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GOETHE'S LITERARY ESSAYS

I

GOETHE AS A CRITIC

"Goethe, the greatest of modern critics, the greatest critic of all times."—SAINTE-BEUVE.

"That great and supreme critic."—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

"Goethe, the most widely receptive of all critics."—JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

"Goethe, the master of all modern spirits."—TAINE.

"The perusal of his Works would show that Criticism is also a science of which he is master; that if ever a man had studied Art in all its branches and bearings, from its origin in the depths of the creative spirit to its minutest finish on the canvas of the painter, on the lips of the poet, or under the finger of the musician, he was that man."—CARLYLE.

"He is also a great critic; yet he always said the best he could about an author. Good critics are rarer than good authors."—TENNYSON.

"The view of *Hamlet* scattered throughout the book [*Wilhelm Meister*] is not so much criticism as high poetry. And what else except a poem can be born when a poet intuitively presents anew a work of poetry?"—FRIEDRICH SCHLEGEL.

"I shall die ungoethed, I doubt, so far as Poetry goes; I always believe he was Critic and Philosopher."—EDWARD FITZGERALD.

"For the Goethe of *Faust*, of the great lyrics, and of some other things, I have almost unlimited admiration; but for the critical Goethe I feel very much less."—GEORGE SAINTSBURY.

"Goethe is the supreme hero of intellectual humanity."—REMY DE GOURMONT.

"Goethe, as usual, must be pronounced to have the last word of reason and wisdom, the word which comprehends most of the truth of the matter."—LORD MORLEY.

GOETHE'S LITERARY ESSAYS

A SELECTION IN ENGLISH

ARRANGED BY

J. E. SPINGARN

WITH A FOREWORD BY

VISCOUNT HALDANE

180315
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FOREWORD

By Viscount Haldane

Of Goethe Sainte-Beuve held that he was the "king of criticism." Sainte-Beuve was among the most competent of judges on such a point, and Matthew Arnold has endorsed his conclusion. The reason for it is not far to seek. Goethe's gifts as a critic fell within a large whole of knowledge which was his in a degree for which we must look back over two thousand years to Aristotle if we wish to find a rival. He wrote lyrics that are supreme in their kind. His capacity for observation of nature was, as Helmholtz has pointed out, of the first order. Although he hated philosophy, he had, none the less, a fine instinct for great metaphysical conceptions. Spinoza and Kant both made appeal to him, and the appeal was responded to from the depths of his nature. The world has seen no poem like *Faust*, with the exquisite perfection of the "Dedication" and the lyrical outbursts with which the first part is studded, set in a structure which signifies a profound conception of life as a whole, into which far-reaching reflection has entered. The second part of the drama is as great in this latter regard as is the first part in its occasional exhibitions of the purest lyrical gift.

Goethe's work was uneven, as was his life. That is what we must expect from the variety which both contained. But through each a great purpose is obviously in process of continuous realization, a purpose

which never flags, of presenting the world as a place where man may work out what is directed towards the highest and belongs to what is above Time. It is always the effort that counts, and not any result outside, conceived abstractly and apart from the effort. The quality of the struggle "to conquer life and freedom daily anew" is what constitutes the victory. We are apt to remain with Goethe's poetry and to content ourselves with the enjoyment of its perfection. But that is to miss half the lesson which this man, one of the very greatest sons the earth ever bore, has to teach us. It is his outlook on life as a whole which we must master if we would learn for ourselves what freedom from what is narrow means with him. And this outlook we find at least as much in his criticism as in his lyrics. We have to turn to the *Autobiography*, to *Meister*, and to the *Prose Sayings*, if we would find the other half. Beyond these books, too, there remains much else which it would occupy years for the student to discover for himself unaided.

That is why a book such as that to which these lines are written by way of preface may prove a source of help and inspiration to the general reader.

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THE THEORY OF ART

ON GERMAN ARCHITECTURE

(1773)

Von Deutscher Baukunst

D. M.

Ervini a Steinbach

As I wandered about at your grave, noble Erwin,[1] in order to pour out my veneration for you at the sacred spot itself, I looked for the stone which bore this inscription: "Anno Domini 1318, XVI. Kal. Febr. obiit Magister Ervinus, Gubernator Fabricae Ecclesiae Argentinensis;" and when I could not find it and none of your countrymen could point it out to me, I became sad of soul, and my heart, younger, warmer, more tender and better than it is now, vowed a memorial to you, of marble or sandstone, as might be in my power, when I came into the peaceful enjoyment of my fortune.

But what need have you for a memorial! You have built the most splendid memorial for yourself; and although the ants who crawl around there do not trouble themselves about your name, yet you have a destiny like that of the builder who heaped up mountains into the clouds.

To few has it been granted to create such mighty

[1] Erwin von Steinbach, one of the architects of the Strassburg Cathedral.

ideas in their minds, complete, gigantic, and consistently beautiful down to the last detail, like trees of God; to fewer was it given to find a thousand willing hands to work, to excavate the rocky foundation, to conjure up towering structures upon it, and then when dying to say to their sons,—I remain with you in the works of my genius; carry on to its completion in the clouds what I have begun.

What need have you for memorials! and from me! When the rabble utters sacred names, it is either superstition or blasphemy. Those of feeble spirit and taste will always have their head turned before your mighty work, and genuine souls will come to know you without a guide.

Therefore, honored man, before I venture again my patched-up bark upon the ocean, destined as it is more likely to death than to fame and fortune, see, here in this grove where bloom the names of my loves, I cut yours on a beech-tree which lifts its slender trunk high in the air like your own tower, and I hang on it too this handkerchief filled with gifts, not unlike that sheet which was let down from the clouds to the holy apostle, full of clean and unclean beasts; for this is full of flowers and buds and leaves, and some dried grass and moss and fungi, which on my walk through these uninteresting regions I coldly gathered as a pastime for my botanical collection,—I dedicate them to death in your honor.

What a trivial style, says the Italian, and passes by. Childishness, lisps the Frenchman, and snaps his finger against his snuff-box à la Grecque. What have you done that you dare to despise?

But you, O Italian, you have let the genius of the ancients, arising from its grave, fetter and bind your own. You crept to beg for artistic knowledge from the splendid relics of the olden time, you patched together palaces from these sacred ruins, and consider yourself the guardian of the secrets of art, because you can give account of the measurements by inch and line of enormous buildings. Had you *felt* more than you *measured,* had the spirit of the gigantic structures at which you gazed come to you, you would not have imitated merely because they did it thus and it is beautiful. But you would have created your own designs, and there would have flowed out of them living beauty to instruct you.

Thus upon your shortcomings you have plastered a whitewashing, a mere appearance of truth and beauty. The splendid effect of pillars struck you, you wished to use them in your building and have great rows of columns too; so you encircled St. Peter's with marble passageways, which lead nowhere in particular, so that mother Nature, who despises and hates the inappropriate and the unnecessary, drove your rabble to prostitute that splendor for public "cloaca," with the result that you turn away your eyes and hold your nose before the wonder of the world.

Everything goes the same way: the whim of the artist serves the caprice of the rich man; the writer of travels stands agape, and our beaux esprits, called philosophers, wrest out of formless myths facts and principles of art to be applied to the present day; and their evil genius murders sincere men at the threshold of these mysteries.

More harmful to the genius than examples are rules.

Before his time individual men may have worked up individual parts and aspects. He is the first from whose mind come the parts grown together into one ever-living whole. But a school or a rule fetters all the power of his insight and his activity. What is it to us, you modern French philosophical critic, that the first inventor, responding to necessity, stuck four trunks in the ground, bound on them four poles and covered it all with branches and moss? To determine from this what is appropriate for our present needs is like demanding that your new Babylon be ruled by the old despotic patriarchal father-right.

And in addition it is not true that this house of yours is the most primitive form in the world. That with two poles in front crossed at the end, two in back and one lying straight between them for a ridge-pole is, as we can notice every day in the huts in the fields and vineyards, a far more primitive invention, from which you could hardly abstract a principle for your pig-pen.

Thus none of your conclusions are able to rise into the region of truth, but all hang in the lower atmosphere of your system. You wish to teach us what we ought to use, since what we do use, according to your principles cannot be justified.

The column is very dear to you, and in another clime you would be prophet. You say: The column is the first essential ingredient of a building, and the most beautiful. What noble elegance of form, what pure grandeur, when they are placed in a row! Only guard against using them inappropriately; it is their nature to be free and detached. Alas for the unfortunates who try to join the slender shape of them to heavy walls!

Yet it seems to me, dear abbé, that the frequent repetition of this impropriety of building columns into walls, so that the moderns have even stuffed the intercolumnia of ancient temples with masonry, might have aroused in your mind some reflections. If your ears were not deaf to the truth, these stones would have preached a sermon to you.

Columns are in no way an ingredient in our dwellings; they contradict rather the style of all our buildings. Our houses have not their origin in four columns placed in four corners. They are built out of four walls on four sides, which take the place of columns, indeed exclude all columns, and where these are used to patch up, they are an encumbrance and a superfluity. This is true of our palaces and churches, with the exception of a few cases, which I do not need to mention.

Thus your buildings exhibit mere surface, which, the broader it is extended,—the higher it is raised to the sky,—the more unendurable must become the monotony which oppresses the soul. But Genius came to our aid, and said to Erwin von Steinbach: Diversify the huge wall, which you are to raise heavenward, so that it may soar like a lofty, far-spreading tree of God, which with a thousand branches, millions of twigs, and leaves like the sand of the sea, proclaims everywhere the glory of God, its Master.

When I went for the first time to the Minster, my head was full of the common cant of "good taste." From hearsay, I was an admirer of the harmony of mass, the purity of form, and was a sworn enemy to

the confused arbitrariness of Gothic adornment. Under the term, "Gothic," like the article in a dictionary, I piled all the misconceptions which had ever come into my head, of the indefinite, the unregulated, the unnatural, the patched-up, the strung-together, the superfluous, in art. No wiser than a people which calls the whole foreign world, "barbarous," everything was Gothic to me that did not fit into my system, from the turned wooden dolls and pictures of gay colors, with which the bourgeois nobility decorate their houses, to the dignified relics of the older German architecture, my opinion of which, because of some bizarre scroll-work, had been that of everybody,—"Quite buried in ornamentation!"; consequently I had an aversion to seeing it, such as I would have before a malformed bristling monster.

With what unexpected emotions did the sight surprise me when I actually saw it! An impression of grandeur and unity filled my soul, which, because it consisted of a thousand harmonizing details, I could taste and enjoy, but by no means understand and explain. They say it is thus with the rapture of heaven. How often I returned to enjoy this heavenly-earthly rapture, to embrace the stupendous genius of our older brothers in their works. How often I returned to view from every side, at every distance, in every light of the day, its dignity and splendor. Hard it is for the mind of man when his brother's work is so elevated that he can only bow down and pray. How often has the evening twilight refreshed with its friendly calm my eyes wearied by too much gazing; it made countless details melt together into a complete whole and mass, and now, simple and grand, it stood before my eyes, and,

full of rapture, my power unfolded itself both to enjoy and to understand it at once. There was revealed to me in soft intimations the genius of the great builder. "Why are you astonished?" He whispered to me. "All these masses were necessary, and do you not see them in all the older churches of my city? Only I have given harmonious proportion to their arbitrary vastnesses. See how, over the principal entrance which commands two smaller ones on either side, the wide circle of the window opens which corresponds to the nave of the church and was formerly merely a hole to let the light in; see how the bell-tower demands the smaller windows! All this was necessary, and I designed it with beauty. But what of these dark and lofty apertures here at the side which seem to stand so empty and meaningless? In their bold slender forms I have hidden the mysterious strength which was to raise both of those towers high in the air, of which alas only one stands there sadly, without the crown of five towers which I had planned for it, so that to it and its royal brother the country about would do homage." And so he parted from me, and I fell into a sympathetic mood of melancholy, until the birds of morning, which dwelt in its thousand orifices, greeted the sun joyously and waked me out of my slumber. How freshly it shone in the morning rays, how joyfully I stretched my arms towards it, surveying its vast harmonious masses, animated by countless delicate details of structure! as in the works of eternal Nature, every form, down to the smallest fibril, alive, and everything contributing to the purpose of the whole! How lightly the monstrous, solidly grounded building soared into the air! how free and delicate everything about it, and yet solid for eter-

nity! To your teaching, noble genius, I owe thanks that I did not faint and sink before your heights and depths, but that into my soul flowed a drop of that calm rapture of the mighty soul which could look on this creation, and like God say,—"It is good!"

And now I ought not to be angry, revered Erwin, when the German critic and scholar, taking the cue from envious neighbors, and misjudging the superiority of your work, belittles it by the little understood term, "Gothic"; since he ought rather to give thanks that he can proclaim loudly that this is German architecture,—our architecture,—whereas the Italians cannot boast of any distinctively native style, much less the French. And if you are not willing to admit to yourself this superiority, at least show us then that the Goths have already built in this style,—in which effort you may encounter some difficulties. And finally, if you cannot demonstrate that there was a Homer already before Homer, then we will gladly allow the story of small attempts, successful and unsuccessful, and come reverently back to the work of the master who first drew the scattered elements together into one living whole. And you, my dear brother in the spirit, in your search for truth and beauty, close your ears to the loud talk about the plastic arts,—come, enjoy, survey. Beware of desecrating the name of your noblest artist, and hasten here that you may enjoy and see his glorious work. If it makes an unfavorable impression or none, then farewell, hitch up, and take the road straight for Paris.

But you I would accompany, dear youth, who stand there, your soul moved, and yet unable to harmonize

the contradictions which conflict in your mind, now feeling the irresistible power of the great whole, now calling me a dreamer for seeing beauty where you see only violence and roughness. Do not let a misunderstanding part us, do not let the feeble teaching of the modern standards of beauty spoil you for vigorous though rough strength, so that finally your sickly sensibility is able to endure only meaningless insipidities. They would have you believe that the fine arts originated in the tendency which they impute to us to beautify the things about us. That is not true! For in the sense in which it could be true, it is the bourgeois and the artisans who use the words and not the philosopher.

Art has a long period of growth before it is beautiful, certainly sincere and great art has, and it is often sincerer and greater then than when it becomes beautiful. For in man there is a creative disposition, which comes into activity as soon as his existence is assured. As soon as he has nothing to worry about or to fear, this semi-divinity in him, working effectively in his spiritual peace and assurance, grasps materials into which to breathe its own spirit. Thus the savage depicts, with strange lines and forms, ghastly figures, lurid colors, his weapons and his body. And even if these pictures consist of the most arbitrary and incongruous forms and lines, they will, without any intended proportion or balance, yet have a sort of harmony; for a unity of feeling created out of them a characteristic whole.

Now this characteristic art is the only genuine art. If only it comes fresh from the inner soul, expressing the original, unique sensibilities, untroubled, indeed

unconscious of any external element, it may spring from rough savagery or from cultivated sensitiveness, yet it will always be complete and alive. This you can see among nations and individual men in countless degrees. The more the soul rises to the feeling for relations, which alone are beautiful and from eternity, whose master-chords one can demonstrate, whose mysteries one can only feel, in which alone the life of the divine genius seeks expression in enraptured melodies; the more this beauty pervades the soul of a genius so that it seems to have originated with him, so that nothing else satisfies him, so that he can bring nothing else out of himself, the more fortunate is the artist, the more splendid is he, and the more reverently do we stand there and worship God's anointed.

From the level to which Erwin has mounted no one will drag him down. Here stands his work; gaze at it and appreciate the deepest feelings for truth and beauty and proportion, working out of a strong, sturdy, rough German soul, out of the narrow, somber, priest-haunted "medium aevum."

And our own "aevum"? It has neglected its genius, driven forth its sons to collect strange excrescences for their corruption. The agile Frenchman, who in unscrupulous fashion collects where he will, has at least an ingenuity in working together his booty into a sort of unity; he builds his wonderful church of the Magdalene out of Greek columns and German arches and vaults. From one of our architects, who was requested to design a portal for an old German church, I have seen a model of perfect, stately antique column-work.

How hateful our varnished doll-painters are to me I cannot express. By their theatrical positions, their

false tints, and gaily-colored costumes, they have captured the eyes of women. But, manly Albrecht Dürer, whom these novices laugh at, your woodcut figures are more welcome to me.

And you yourselves, excellent men, to whom it was given to enjoy the highest beauty, and now come down to announce your bliss, you do prejudice to genius. It will soar and progress on no alien wings, even though they were the wings of the morning. Its own original powers are those which unfold in the dreams of childhood, which grow during the life of youth, until strong and supple like the mountain-lion he starts out after his prey. Nature does most in training these powers, for you pedagogues can never counterfeit the multifarious scene which she provides for a youth to draw from and enjoy in the measure of his present strength.

Welcome, to you, young man, who have been born with a keen eye for form and proportion, with the facility to practise in all forms. If then there awakes gradually in you the joy of life, and you come to feel the rapture which men know after work, fear and hope, —the spirited cries of the laborer in the vineyard when the bounty of the harvest swells his vats, the lively dance of the reaper when he has hung his idle sickle high on the beam,—when all the powerful nerves of desire and suffering live again more manfully in your brush, and you have striven and suffered enough and have enjoyed enough, and are filled with earthly beauty, and worthy to rest in the arms of the goddess, worthy to feel on her bosom what gave new birth to the deified Hercules—then receive him, heavenly beauty, thou mediator between gods and men, and let him, more than

Prometheus, carry down the rapture of the gods to the earth.[1]

1 "What I had thought and imagined with respect to that style of architecture, I wrote in a connected form. The first point on which I insisted was that it should be called German, and not Gothic; that it should be considered not foreign, but native. The second point was that it could not be compared with the architecture of the Greeks and Romans, because it sprang from quite another principle. If these, living under a more favorable sky, allowed their roof to rest upon columns, a wall, broken through, arose of its own accord. We, however, who must always protect ourselves against the weather, and everywhere surround ourselves with walls, have to revere the genius who discovered the means of endowing massive walls with variety, of apparently breaking them through, and of thus occupying the eye in a worthy and pleasing manner on a broad surface. . . . If I had been pleased to write down these views (the value of which I will not deny) clearly and distinctly, in an intelligible style, the paper *On German Architecture* would then, when I published it, have produced more effect, and would sooner have drawn the attention of the native friends of art. But, misled by the example of Herder and Hamann, I obscured these very simple thoughts and observations by a dusty cloud of words and phrases, and, both for myself and others, darkened the light which had arisen within me. However, the paper was well received, and reprinted in Herder's work on *German Manner and Art*."—Goethe, *Autobiography* (1812). The "dear abbé" to whom Goethe is replying in this essay is the Abbé Laugier, author of the *Essai sur l'Architecture* (1753).

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROPYLÆA

(1798)

THERE is no more striking sign of the decay of art than when we find its separate provinces mixed up together.

The arts themselves, as well as their subordinate forms, are closely related to each other, and have a certain tendency to unite, and even lose themselves in each other; but herein lies the duty, the merit, the dignity of the true artist, that he knows how to separate that department in which he labors from the others, and, so far as may be, isolates it.

It has been noticed that all plastic art tends towards painting, all poetry to the drama; and this may furnish the text for some important observations hereafter.

The genuine, law-giving artist strives after artistic truth; the lawless, following a blind instinct, after an appearance of naturalness. The former leads to the highest pinnacle of art, the latter to its lowest step.

This is no less true of the separate arts than of art in general. The sculptor must think and feel differently from the painter, and must go to work differently to execute a work in relief from what he would do with a round and complete piece of statuary. When the work in low relief came to be brought out more and more, and by degrees parts and figures were brought out from the ground, at last buildings and landscapes admitted, and thus a work produced, half picture half puppet-show, true art was on the decline; and it is to be

deplored that excellent artists have in more recent times taken this direction.

Whenever we enunciate hereafter such maxims as we esteem true, we shall feel a real desire, since these maxims are drawn from works of art, to have them practically tested by artists. How seldom does one man agree with another concerning a theoretic principle; the practical and immediately useful is far more quickly adopted. How often do we see artists at a loss in the choice of a subject, in the general composition, according to their rules of art, in the arrangement of details; the painter doubtful about the choice of his colors! Then is the time to make trial of a principle; then will it be easier to decide the question,—Do we by its aid come nearer to the great models, and all that we love and prize, or does it forsake us in the empirical confusion of an experiment not thoroughly thought out?

If such maxims should prove useful in forwarding the culture of artists, in guiding them among difficulties, they will also aid the understanding, true estimation, and criticism of ancient and modern works, and, *vice versa*, will again be discovered in the examination of these works. This is all the more necessary, since, in spite of the universally acknowledged excellence of the antique, individuals as well as whole nations have in modern times often misconceived those very things wherein the highest excellence of those works lies.

An exact scrutiny of these will be the best means of securing us against this evil. Let us now take, as an example, the usual course of proceeding of the amateur in plastic art, in order to make it evident how necessary a thorough criticism of ancient as well as modern works is, if we would profit by it.

No person of a fine natural perception, however uncultivated, can see even an imperfect, incorrect cast of a fine ancient work without being greatly impressed by it; for such a representation still gives the idea, the simplicity and greatness of the form, in a word, the general notion at least, such as a man of imperfect sight would see at a distance.

We may often observe how a strong inclination towards art is awakened through such an imperfect reproduction. But the effect is analogous to the object that caused it, and such beginners in art are rather impressed with a blind and indefinite feeling than with the true worth and significance of the object itself. It is such as these who are the authors of the theory that a too curious critical examination destroys our pleasure, and who decry and resist the investigation of details.

But when by degrees their experience and knowledge become wider, and a sharper cast in place of the imperfect one, or an original instead of a cast comes under their observation, their satisfaction increases with their insight, and continually advances when at last the originals themselves, the perfect originals, become known to them.

We are not deterred by the labyrinth of thorough examination, when the details are of equal perfection with the whole work. Nay, we learn that we are able to appreciate the perfect, just so far as we are in a condition to discern the defective: to distinguish the restored from the original parts, the copy from the model, to contemplate in the smallest fragments the scattered excellence of the whole, is a satisfaction that belongs only to the perfect connoisseur; and there is

a wide difference between the contemplation of an imperfect whole with groping sense, and the seeing and seizing, with clear eye, of a perfect one.

He who devotes himself to any department of knowledge should aim at the highest. Insight and Practice follow widely different paths, for in the practical each one soon becomes aware that only a certain measure of power is meted to him. But a far greater number of men are capable of knowledge, of insight; we may even say that every man is so who can deny himself, subordinate himself to objects, and does not strive with a rigid and narrow individuality to bring in himself and his poor onesidedness amid the highest works of nature and art.

To speak suitably, and with real advantage to one's self and others, of works of art, can properly be done only in their presence. All depends on the sight of the object. On this it depends whether the word by which we hope to elucidate the work has produced the clearest impression or none at all. Hence it so often happens that the author who writes concerning works of art deals only in generalities, whereby indeed the mind and imagination are awakened; but of all his readers, he only will derive satisfaction who, book in hand, examines the work itself.

On this account, therefore, we may in our essays often excite rather than gratify the desire of our readers; for there is nothing more natural than that they should wish to have before their eyes any excellent work of which they read a minute criticism, to enjoy that whole which is in question, and to subject to their own judgments the opinions they hear concerning the parts.

But whilst it is the expectation of the authors to labor in behalf of those who are already acquainted with some works and will see others hereafter, we shall try to do what is possible for those who have neither the prospect nor the retrospect. We shall make mention of copies, point out where casts from the antique or ancient works themselves, especially when these are within easy reach, may be found, and thus forward, as far as in us lies, a true love and knowledge of art.

The history of art can be based only on the highest and most complete conception of art; only through an acquaintance with the most perfect that man has ever been enabled to produce can the chronological and psychological progress of mankind in art, as in other departments, be displayed. At first a limited activity occupied itself in a dry and dismal imitation of the insignificant as well as the significant, then a more delicate and agreeable feeling of Nature was developed. Afterwards, accompanied by knowledge, regularity, strength and earnestness, aided by favorable circumstances, art rose to the highest point, until at last it became possible for the fortunate genius who found himself surrounded by all these auxiliaries to produce the enchanting, the perfect.

Unfortunately, works of art, which give themselves forth with such facility, which make men feel themselves so agreeably, which inspire man with clearness and freedom, suggest to the artist who would emulate them the notion of facility in their production. The last achievement of Art and Genius being an appearance of ease and lightness, the imitator is tempted to make it easy for himself, and to labor at this appearance.

Thus, by degrees, art declines from its high estate, in the whole as well as in details. But if we would form to ourselves a true conception of art, we must descend to details of details, an occupation by no means always agreeable and alluring, but for which gradually our eye's ready mastery of the whole will richly indemnify us.

If we work out certain general principles through the examination of ancient and mediæval works of art, we shall find them particularly needful in our judgment of contemporary productions; for in forming an estimate of living or lately deceased artists, personal considerations, regard or dislike for individuals, popular attraction or repulsion, are so easily mixed up, that we are still more in need of principles in order to express a judgment of our contemporaries. The examination can be undertaken in two ways. Arbitrary influence is diminished, and the case is brought into a higher court. An opportunity is afforded for proving the principles themselves as well as their application; and even where we cannot agree, the point in dispute is clearly and certainly ascertained.

We especially desire that living artists, about whose works we may perhaps have something to say, should make trial of our judgments in this way. For every one who deserves this name is in our time called upon to form, out of his own experience and reflection, if not a theory, at least a certain set of receipts, by the use of which he finds himself aided in various cases. But it must have been frequently remarked how apt a man is, by proceeding in this way, to advance as principles certain maxims which are commensurate with his talents, his inclinations, his convenience. He is subject

to the common lot of mankind. How many in other departments follow the same course. But we do not add to our culture when we simply set in motion without trouble or difficulty what already existed in us. Every artist, like every man, is only an individual being, and will always abide by one side; and therefore a man should take in to himself as far as possible that which is theoretically and practically opposed to him. The lively should look about for strength and earnestness, the severe should keep in view the light and agreeable, the strong should look for loveliness, the delicate for strength, and each will thus best cultivate his peculiar nature, while he seems to be going most out of himself. Each art demands the whole man, the highest step of art all humanity.

The practice of the imitative arts is mechanical, and the cultivation of the artist begins naturally in his earliest years with the mechanical. The rest of his education is often slighted, whereas it should be far more carefully attended to than that of others who have the opportunity of learning from life itself. Society soon civilizes the unpolished; a life of business makes the most open circumspect. Literary labors, which by means of the press come before the great public, find resistance and correction on all sides. But the artist is for the most part confined to a narrow studio, and has few dealings save with those who pay for his works, with a public that is often guided only by a certain sickly feeling, with connoisseurs who worry him, with auctioneers who receive anything new with formulas of praise and estimation that would not be too high for the most perfect.

UPON THE LAOCOON

(1798)

A TRUE work of art, like a true work of nature, never ceases to open boundlessly before the mind. We examine,—we are impressed with it,—it produces its effect; but it can never be all comprehended, still less can its essence, its value, be expressed in words. In the present remarks concerning the Laocoon, our object is by no means to say all that can be said on the subject; we shall make this admirable work rather the occasion than the subject of what we have to say. May it soon be placed once more in a situation where all lovers of art may be able to enjoy and speak of it, each in his own way.

We can hardly speak adequately of a high work of art without also speaking of art in general; since all art is comprehended in it, and each one is able, according to his powers, to develop the universal out of such a special case. We shall therefore begin with some remarks of a general nature.

All high works of art are expressions of humanity. Plastic art relates particularly to the human form; it is of this we are now speaking. Art has many steps, in all of which there have been admirable artists; but a perfect work of art embraces all the qualities that are elsewhere encountered only separately.

The highest works of art that we know exhibit to us—

Living, highly organized natures. We look, in the first place, for a knowledge of the human body, in its parts and proportions, inward and outward adaptation, its forms and motions generally.

Character. Knowledge of the varieties in form and action of their parts; peculiarities are discriminated, and separately set forth. Out of this results character, through which an important relation may be established among separate works; and, in like manner, when a work is put together, its parts may hold an analogous relation to each other. The subject may be—

At rest, or in motion. A work, or its parts, may either be self-centred, simply showing its character in a state of rest, or it may be exhibited in movement, activity, or fullness of passionate expression.

Ideal. To the attainment of this, the artist needs a deep, well-grounded, steadfast mind, which must be accompanied by a higher sense, in order to comprehend the subject in all its bearings, to find the moment of expression, to withdraw this from the narrowness of fact, and give to it, in an ideal world, proportion, limit, reality and dignity.

Agreeableness. The subject and its mode of exhibition are moreover connected with the sensible laws of art; viz., harmony, comprehensibility, symmetry, contrast, etc.; whereby it becomes visibly beautiful, or agreeable, as it is called.

Beauty. Farther, we find that it obeys the laws of spiritual beauty, which arises from just proportion, and to which he who is complete in the creation or production of the beautiful knows how to subject even the extremes.

Now that I have defined the conditions which we demand of a high work of art, much will be comprised in a few words when I say that the Laocoon group fulfils them all, nay, that out of it alone all of them could be developed.

It will be conceded by all that it exhibits acquaintance with the human form, and with what is characteristic in it, and at the same time expression and passion. In how high and ideal a way the subject is treated will presently be shown; and no one who recognizes the harmony with which the extremes of bodily and mental suffering are set forth can hesitate in calling the work beautiful.

On the other hand, many will think I am uttering a paradox when I maintain that the work is also *agreeable.* A word upon this point.

Every work of art must show on the face of it that it is such; and this can be done only through what we call sensuous beauty, or agreeableness. The ancients, far from entertaining the modern notion that a work of art must have the appearance of a work of nature, designated their works of art as such through an intentional arrangement of parts; by means of symmetry they rendered easy for the eye an insight into relations, and thus a complicated work was made comprehensible. Through symmetry and opposition slight deviations were made productive of the sharpest contrasts. The pains of the artist were most happily bestowed to place the masses in opposition to each other, and particularly in groups, to bring the extremities of the bodies against each other in a harmonious position; so that every work, when we disregard its import, and look only at its general outline from a

distance, strikes the eye by its ornamental air. The antique vases furnish a hundred instances of this sort of agreeable composition, and perhaps it would be possible to exhibit a series of examples of symmetrically artistic and charming groupings, from the most quiet vase-sculptures up to the Laocoon. I shall therefore venture to repeat the assertion that the group of Laocoon, in addition to its other acknowledged merits, is at once a model of symmetry and variety, of repose and action, of contrast and gradation, which produce an impression partly sensible, partly spiritual, agreeably stimulate the imagination by the high pathos of the representation, and by their grace and beauty temper the storm of passion and suffering.

It is a great advantage for a work of art to be self-included and complete. An object at rest, exhibiting simple being, is thus complete by and in itself. A Jupiter, the thunderbolt resting in his lap; a Juno, reposing in her majesty and feminine dignity; a Minerva, inwardly intent—are all subjects that have no impulse outwards, that rest upon and in themselves; the first, the most lovely subjects of sculpture. But within the noble round of the mythic circle of art, where these separate self-existent natures stand and rest, there are smaller circles, within which the figures are conceived and wrought out with reference to other figures; for example, the nine Muses, with their leader, Apollo, are each conceived and executed separately, but they become far more interesting in their complete and diversified choir. When art attempts scenes of exalted passion, it can treat them also in the same manner; it may either present to us a circle of figures holding a passionate relation to each other, like the

Niobe and her children, pursued by Apollo and Diana, or exhibit in the same piece the action and the motive; we have in mind such groups as the graceful boy extracting the thorn from his foot, the wrestler, two groups of fawns and nymphs in Dresden, and the noble and animated group of Laocoon.

Sculpture is justly entitled to the high rank it holds, because it can and must carry expression to its highest point of perfection, from the fact that it leaves man only the absolutely essential. Thus, in the present group, Laocoon is a bare name; the artists have stripped him of his priesthood, his Trojan nationality, of every poetical or mythological attribute; there remains nothing of all that fable had clothed him with; he is a father with his two sons, in danger of destruction from two fierce animals. In like manner, we see no messenger of the gods, but two plain, natural serpents, powerful enough to overcome three men, but, by no means, either in form or action, supernatural and avenging ministers of wrath. They glide in, as it is their nature to do, twine around, knot together, and one, being irritated, bites. If I had to describe this work without knowing the farther intent of it, I should say it were a Tragic Idyl. A father was sleeping, with his two sons beside him; two serpents twined about them, and now waking, they struggled to free themselves from the living net.

The expression of the moment is, in this work, of the highest importance. When it is intended that a work of art shall move before the eye, a passing moment must, of course, be chosen; but a moment ago not a single part of the whole was to be found in the position it now holds, and in another instant all will be

changed again; so that it presents a fresh, living image to a million beholders.

In order to conceive rightly the intention of the Laocoon, let a man place himself before it at a proper distance, with his eyes shut; then let him open his eyes, and shut them again instantly. By this means he will see the whole marble in motion; he will fear lest he finds the whole group changed when he opens his eyes again. It might be said that, as it stands, it is a flash of lightning fixed, a wave petrified in the moment it rushes towards the shore. The same effect is produced by the contemplation of the group by torch-light.

The situation of the three figures is represented with a wise gradation. In the oldest son only the extremities are entangled; the second is encumbered with more folds, and especially by the knot around his breast; he endeavors to get breath by the motion of his right arm; with the left he gently holds back the serpent's head, to prevent him from taking another turn round his breast. The serpent is in the act of slipping under the hand, but *does not bite.* The father, on the other hand, tries to set himself and the children free by force; he grasps the other serpent, which, exasperated, bites him on the hip.

The best way to understand the position of the father, both in the whole and in detail, seems to be to take the sudden anguish of the wound as the moving cause of the whole action. The serpent has not bitten, but is just now biting, and in a sensitive part, above and just behind the hip. The position of the restored head of the serpent does not represent the bite correctly; fortunately, the remains of the two

jaws may yet be seen on the hinder part of the statue, if only these important vestiges are not destroyed in the course of the present paltry alterations. The serpent inflicts a wound upon the unhappy man, in a part where we are excessively sensible to any irritation, where even a little tickling is able to produce the action which in this case is caused by the wound. The figure starts away towards the opposite side, the abdomen is drawn in, the shoulder forced down, the breast thrust out, the head sinks towards the wounded side; the secondary portion of the situation or treatment appears in the imprisoned feet and the struggling arms; and thus from the contrast of struggle and flight, of action and suffering, of energy and failing strength, results an harmonious action that would perhaps be impossible under other conditions. We are lost in astonishment at the sagacity of the artist; if we try to place the bite in some different position the whole action is changed, and we find it impossible to conceive one more fitting. This, therefore, is an important maxim: the artist has represented a sensuous effort, he shows us also its sensuous cause. I repeat, the situation of the bite renders necessary the present action of the limbs. The movement of the lower part of the figure, as if to fly, the drawing in of the abdomen, the downward action of the shoulders and the head, the breast forced out, nay, the expression of each feature of the face, all are determined by this instant, sharp, unlooked-for irritation.

Far be it from me to destroy the unity of human nature, to deny the sympathetic action of the spiritual powers of this nobly complete man, to misconceive the

action and suffering of a great nature. I see also anguish, fear, horror, a father's anxiety pervading these veins, swelling this breast, furrowing this brow. I freely admit that the highest state of mental as well as bodily anguish is here represented; only let us not transfer the effect the work produces on us too vividly to the piece itself; and above all, let us not be looking for the effect of poison in a body which the serpent's fang has but just reached. Let us not fancy we see a death-struggle in a noble, resisting, vigorous, but slightly wounded frame. Here let me have leave to make an observation of importance in art: The maximum expression of pathos that can be given by art hovers in the transition from one state or condition to another. You see a lively child running with all the energy and joy of life, bounding, and full of delight; he is unexpectedly struck somewhat roughly by a playmate, or is otherwise morally or physically hurt. This new sensation thrills like an electric shock through all his limbs, and this transition is full of pathos in the highest meaning; it is a contrast of which one can form no idea without having seen it. In this case plainly the spiritual as well as the physical man is in action. If during the transition there still remain evident traces of the previous state, the result is the noblest subject for plastic art, as is the case in the Laocoon where action and suffering are shown in the same instant. Thus, for instance, Eurydice, bitten in the heel by the snake she has trodden on, as she goes joyfully through the meadow with the flowers she has collected, would make a statue of great pathos, if the twofold state, the joyful advance and its painful arrest, might be

expressed not only by the flowers that she lets fall, but by the direction of her limbs and the doubtful fluttering of her dress.

Having now a clear conception, in this respect, of the main figure, we shall be enabled to give a free and secure glance over the relations, contrasts, and gradations of the collective parts of the whole.

The choice of subject is one of the happiest that can be imagined,—men struggling with dangerous animals, and animals that do not act as a mass of concentrated force, but with divided powers; that do not rush in at one side, nor offer a combined resistance, but capable by their prolonged organization of paralyzing without injuring them, three men, or more or less. From the action of this numbing force results, consistently with the most violent action, a pervading unity and repose throughout the whole. The different action of the serpents is exhibited in gradation. The one is simply twined around its victims, the other becomes irritated and bites its antagonist. The three figures are in like manner most wisely selected: a strong, well-developed man, but evidently past the age of greatest energy, and therefore less able to endure pain and suffering. Substitute in his place a robust young man and the charm of the group vanishes. Joined with him in his suffering are two boys, small in proportion to his figure; again still two natures susceptible of pain.

The struggles of the youngest are powerless; he is frightened, but not injured. The father struggles powerfully, but ineffectually; his efforts have rather the effect to exasperate the opposed force. His opponent, becoming irritated, wounds him. The eldest son is least encumbered. He suffers neither anguish nor

pain; he is frightened by the sudden wounding of his father, and his movement thereupon; he cries out, at the same moment endeavoring to free his foot from the serpent's fold. Here then is spectator, witness, and accessory to the fact; and thus the work is completed. Let me here repeat what I alluded to above,—that all three figures exhibit a twofold action, and thus are occupied in most manifold ways. The youngest son strives to free himself by raising his right arm, and with his left hand keeps back the serpent's head; he is striving to alleviate the present, and avert the greater, evil,—the highest degree of action he can attain in his present imprisoned condition. The father is striving to shake off the serpents, while his body recoils from the immediate bite. The oldest son is terrified by his father's starting, and seeks at the same time to free himself from the lightly entwining serpent.

The choice of the highest moment of expression has already been spoken of as a great advantage possessed by this work of art; let us now consider this problem in greater detail.

We assumed the case of natural serpents twining about a father sleeping by his sons, so that in considering the separate moments, we might be led to a climax of interest. The first moments of the serpents' winding about them in sleep are portentous, but not significant for art. We might perhaps imagine an infant Hercules asleep, with a serpent twined about him; but in this case the form in repose would show us what we were to expect when he waked.

Let us now proceed and figure to ourselves a father with his children, when first—let it have happened how it may—he discovers the serpents wound about him.

There is only one moment of the highest interest,—when one of the figures is made defenseless by the pressure, the second can still fight, but is wounded, the third still retains a hope of escape. In the first condition is the younger son; in the second, the father; in the third, the eldest son. Seek now to find another, a fourth condition! Try to change the order of the *dramatis personae!*

If we now consider the treatment from the beginning, we must acknowledge that it has reached the highest point; and in like manner, if we reflect upon the succeeding moments, we shall perceive that the whole group must necessarily be changed, and that no moment can be found equal to this in artistic significance. The youngest son will either be suffocated by the entwining serpent, or should he in his helpless condition exasperate it, he must be bitten. Neither alternative could we endure, since they suppose an extremity unsuitable for representation. As to the father, he would either be bitten by the serpent in other places, whereby the position of the body would be entirely changed and the previous wounds would either be lost to the beholder or, if made evident, would be loathsome, or the serpent might turn about and assail the eldest son, whose attention would then be turned to himself,—the scene loses its participator, the last glimpse of hope disappears from the group, the situation is no longer tragical, it is fearful. The figure of the father, which is now self-centred in its greatness and its suffering, would in that case be turned towards the son and become a sympathizing subordinate.

Man has, for his own and others' sufferings, only three sorts of sensations, apprehension, terror, and compassion,—the anxious foreseeing of an approaching evil, the unexpected realization of present pain, and sympathy with existing or past suffering; all three are excited by and exhibited in the present work, and in the most fitting gradations.

Plastic art, laboring always for a single point of time, in choosing a subject expressive of pathos will seize one that awakens terror; while Poetry prefers such as excite apprehension and compassion. In the group of Laocoon the suffering of the father awakens terror, and that in the highest degree. Sculpture has done her utmost for him, but, partly to run through the circle of human sensations, partly to soften the effect of so much of the terrible, it excites pity for the younger son, and apprehension for the elder, through the hope that still exists for him. Thus, by means of variety, the artists have introduced a certain balance into their work, have softened and heightened effect by other effects, and completed at once a spiritual and sensuous whole.

In a word, we dare boldly affirm that this work exhausts its subject and happily fulfils all the conditions of art. It teaches us that if the master can infuse his feeling of beauty into tranquil and simple subjects, this feeling can also be exhibited in its highest energy and dignity when it manifests itself in the creation of varied characters, and knows how, by artistic imitation, to temper and control the passionate outbreak of human feeling. We shall give in the sequel a full account of the statues known by the name of the

family of Niobe, as well as the group of the Farnesian Bull; these are among the few representations of pathos that remain to us of antique sculpture.

It has been the usual fate of the moderns to blunder in their choice of subjects of this sort. When Milo, with both his hands fast in the cleft of a tree, is attacked by a lion, art in vain endeavors to create a work that will excite a sincere sympathy. A twofold suffering, a fruitless struggle, a helpless state, a certain defeat can only excite horror, if they do not leave us cold.

Finally, a word concerning this subject in its connection with poetry.

It is doing Virgil and poetic art a great injustice to compare even for a moment this most succinct achievement of Sculpture with the episodical treatment of the subject in the Æneid. Since the unhappy exile, Æneas, is to recount how he and his fellow-citizens were guilty of the unpardonable folly of bringing the famous horse into their city, the Poet must hit upon some way to provide a motive for this action. Everything is subordinated to this end, and the story of Laocoon stands here as a rhetorical argument to justify an exaggeration if only it serves its purpose. Two monstrous serpents come out of the sea with crested heads; they rush upon the children of the priest who had injured the horse, encircle them, bite them, besmear them, twist and twine about the breast and head of the father as he hastens to their assistance, and hold up their heads in triumph while the victim, inclosed in their folds, screams in vain for help. The people are horror-struck and fly at once; no one dares to be a patriot any longer; and the hearer, satiated with the horror of the strange

and loathsome story, is willing to let the horse be brought into the city.

Thus, in Virgil, the story of Laocoon serves only as a step to a higher aim, and it is a great question whether the occurrence be in itself a poetic subject.

THE COLLECTOR AND HIS FRIENDS

(1799)

YESTERDAY a stranger made his appearance, whose name I was already familiar with, and who has the reputation of a skilful connoisseur.[1] I was pleased to see him, made him acquainted generally with my possessions, let him choose what he would from what I exhibited to him. I soon noticed his cultivated eye for works of art, and especially for their history. He knew the masters as well as the scholars; in cases of doubtful works he was familiar with the grounds of uncertainty, and his conversation was highly interesting to me.

Perhaps I should have been hurried on to open myself in a more lively manner towards him, had not my resolve to sound my guest made me from the first take a more quiet tone. His judgment in many cases agreed with mine; in many I was forced to admire his sharp and practised eye. The first thing that struck me was his unmitigated hatred of all Mannerists. I was in pain for some of my favorite pictures, and was curious to discover from what source such a dislike could spring. . . .

Before we were all assembled I seized an opportunity to lend a helping hand to my poor mannerists against the stranger. I spoke of their beautiful nature, their

[1] Alois Hirt, protagonist of the theory of the "characteristic."

happy handling, their grace, and added, to keep myself safe: Thus much I say only to claim for them a certain degree of forbearance, though I admit that that high beauty, which is the highest end and aim of Art, is in fact quite a different thing.

He replied—with a smile that did not altogether please me, inasmuch as it seemed to express a special self-satisfaction and a sort of compassion for me:—Are you then stanch in the old-fashioned principle that Beauty is the last aim of art?

I answered that I was not aware of any higher.

Can you tell me what Beauty is? he exclaimed.

Perhaps not, I replied; but I can show it to you. Let us go and see, even by candlelight, a fine cast of Apollo or a beautiful marble bust of Bacchus that I possess, and try if we cannot agree that they are beautiful.

Before we go upon this quest, said he, it would be necessary for us to examine more closely this word Beauty and its derivation. Beauty (*Schönheit*) comes from show (*Schein*); it is an appearance, and not worthy to be the object of art. The perfectly characteristic only deserves to be called beauty; without Character there is no Beauty.

Surprised by this mode of expression, I replied: Granted, though it be not proved, that beauty must be characteristic; yet from this it only follows that character lies at the root of beauty, but by no means that Beauty and Character are the same. Character holds to the beautiful the same relation that the skeleton does to the living man. No one will deny that the osseous system is the foundation of all highly organized forms. It consolidates and defines the form, but is not the

form itself; still less does it bring about that last appearance which, as the veil and integument of an organized whole, we call Beauty.

I cannot embark in similitudes, said my guest, and from your own words, moreover, it is evident that beauty is something incomprehensible, or the effect of something incomprehensible. What cannot be comprehended is naught; what we cannot make clear by words is nonsense.

I.—Can you then clearly express in words the effect that a colored body produces on your eyes?

He.—That is again a metaphor that I will not be drawn into. It is enough that character can be indicated. You find no beauty without it, else it would be empty and insignificant. All the beauty of the Ancients is only Character, and only out of this quality is beauty developed.

Our Philosopher [1] had arrived meanwhile and was conversing with my nieces, when, hearing us speak earnestly, he stepped forward; and the stranger, stimulated by the accession of a new hearer, proceeded:

That is just the misfortune when good heads, when people of merit, get hold of such false principles, which have only an appearance of truth, and spread them wider and wider. None appropriate them so willingly as those who know and understand nothing of the subject. Thus has Lessing fastened upon us the principle that the ancients cultivated only the beautiful; thus has Winckelmann put us to sleep with his "noble simplicity and serene greatness"; whereas the art of the ancients appears in all imaginable forms. But these gentlemen tarry by Jupiter and Juno, Genii and Graces,

[1] Schiller.

and hide the ignoble forms and skulls of Barbarians, the rough hair, foul beard, gaunt bones, and wrinkled skin of deformed age, the protruding veins and hanging breasts.

In the name of God, I exclaimed, are there then independent, self-existing works of the best age of Ancient Art that exhibit such frightful objects? Or are they not rather subordinate works, occasional pieces, creations of an art that must demean itself according to outward circumstances, an art on the decline?

He.—I give you the specification, you can yourself search and judge. But you will not deny that the Laocoon, that Niobe, that Dirce with her stepsons, are self-subsistent works of art. Stand before the Laocoon and contemplate nature in full revolt and desperation. The last choking pang, the desperate struggle, the maddening convulsion, the working of the corroding poison, the vehement fermenting, the stagnating circulation, suffocating pressure, and paralytic death.

The Philosopher seemed to look at me with astonishment, and I answered: We shudder, we are horrified at the bare description. In sooth, if it be so with the group of Laocoon, what are we to say of the pleasure we find in this as in every other true work of art? But I will not meddle in the question. You must settle it with the authors of the *Propylaea,* who are of just the opposite mind.

It must be admitted, said my guest, that all Antiquity speaks for me; for where do horror and death rage more hideously than in the representation of the Niobe?

I was confounded by this assertion, for only a short time before I had been looking at the copper-plates

in Fabroni, which I immediately brought forward and opened. I find no trace in the statues of raging horror and death, but rather the greatest subordination of tragical situation under the highest ideas of dignity, nobleness, beauty, and simplicity. I trace everywhere the artistic purpose to dispose the limbs agreeably and gracefully. The character is expressed only in the most general lines, which run through the work like a sort of ideal skeleton.

He.—Let us turn to the bas-reliefs, which we shall find at the end of the book.

We turned to them.

I.—Of anything horrible, to speak truly, I see no trace here either. Where is this rage of horror and death? I see figures so artfully interwoven, so happily placed against or extended upon each other, that while they remind me of a mournful destiny, they give room at the same time for the most charming imaginations. All that is characteristic is tempered, the violent is elevated, and I might say that Character lies at the foundation; upon it rest simplicity and dignity; the highest aim of art is beauty and its last effect the feeling of pleasure. The agreeable, which may not be immediately united with the characteristic, comes remarkably before our eyes in these sarcophagi. Are not the dead sons and daughters of Niobe here made use of as ornaments? This is the highest luxury of art; she adorns no longer with flowers and fruits, but with the corpses of men, with the greatest misfortune that can befall a father or mother, to see a blooming family all at once snatched away. Yes, the beauteous genius who stands beside the grave, his torch reversed, has stood beside the artist as he invented

and perfected, and over his earthly greatness has breathed a heavenly grace.

My guest looked at me with a smile, and shrugged his shoulders. Alas,—said he, as I concluded,—alas, I see plainly that we can never agree. What a pity that a man of your acquirements, of your sense, will not perceive that these are all empty words; that to a man of understanding Beauty and Ideal must always be a dream which he cannot translate into reality, but finds to be in direct opposition to it. . . .

I.—Will you allow me also to put in a word?

The guest (somewhat scornfully.)—With all my heart, and I hope nothing about mere phantoms.

I.—I have some acquaintance with the poetry of the ancients, but have little knowledge of the plastic arts.

Guest.—That I regret; for in that case we can hardly come to an understanding.

I.—And yet the fine arts are nearly related, and the friends of the separate arts should not misunderstand each other.

Uncle.—Let us hear what you have to say.

I.—The old tragic writers dealt with the stuff in which they worked in the same way as the plastic artists, unless these engravings, representing the family of Niobe, give an altogether false impression of the original.

Guest.—They are passably good. They convey an imperfect but not a false impression.

I.—Well, then, to that extent we can take them for a ground to go upon.

Uncle.—What is it you assert of the treatment of the ancient tragic writers?

I.—The subjects they chose, especially in the early times, were often of an unbearable frightfulness.

Guest.—Were the ancient fables insupportably frightful?

I.—Undoubtedly; in the same manner as your account of the Laocoon.

Guest.—Did you find that also unbearable?

I.—I ask pardon. I meant the thing you describe, not your description.

Guest.—And the work itself also?

I.—By no means the work itself, but that which you have seen in it,—the fable, the history, the skeleton,—that which you name the characteristic. For if the Laocoon really stood before our eyes such as you have described it, we ought not to hesitate a moment to dash it to pieces.

Guest.—You use strong expressions.

I.—One may do that as well as another.

Uncle.—Now then for the ancient tragedies.

Guest.—Yes, these insupportable subjects.

I.—Very good; but also this manner of treatment that makes everything endurable, beautiful, graceful.

Guest.—And that is effected by means of "simplicity and serene greatness?"

I.—So it appears.

Guest.—By the softening principle of Beauty?

I.—It can be nothing else.

Guest.—And the old tragedies were after all not frightful?

I.—Hardly, so far as my knowledge extends, if you listen to the poets themselves. In fact, if we regard in poetry only the material which lies at the foundation, if we are to speak of works of art as if in their

place we had seen the actual circumstances, then even the tragedies of Sophocles can be described as loathsome and horrible.

Guest.—I will not pass judgment on poetry.

I.—Nor I on plastic art.

Guest.—Yes, it is best for each to stick to his own department.

I.—And yet there is a common point of union for all the arts wherefrom the laws of all proceed.

Guest.—And that is—

I.—The soul of man.

Guest.—Ay, ay; that is just the way with you gentlemen of the new school of philosophy. You bring everything upon your own ground and province; and, in fact, it is more convenient to shape the world according to your ideas than to adapt your notions to the truth of things.

I.—Here is no question of any metaphysical dispute.

Guest.—If there were I should certainly decline it.

I.—I shall admit for the sake of argument that Nature can be imagined as absolutely apart from man, but with him art necessarily concerns itself, for art exists only through man and for man.

Guest.—Where does all this tend?

I.—You yourself, when you make Character the end of art, appoint the understanding, which takes cognizance of the characteristic, as the judge.

Guest.—To be sure I do. What I cannot seize with my understanding does not exist for me.

I.—Yet man is not only a being of thought, but also of feeling. He is a whole; a union of various, closely connected powers; and to this whole of man

the work of art is to address itself. It must speak to this rich unity, this simple variety in him.

Guest.—Don't carry me with you into these labyrinths, for who could ever help us out again?

I.—It will then be best for us to give up the dispute and each retain his position.

Guest.—I shall at least hold fast to mine.

I.—Perhaps a means may still be found whereby, if one does not take the other's position, he can at least observe him in it.

Guest.—Propose it then.

I.—We will for a moment contemplate art in its origin.

Guest.—Good.

I.—Let us accompany the work of art on its road to perfection.

Guest.—But only by the way of experience, if you expect me to follow. I will have nothing to do with the steep paths of speculation.

I.—You allow me to begin at the beginning?

Guest.—With all my heart.

I.—A man feels an inclination for some object; let us suppose a single living being.

Guest.—As, for instance, this pretty lap-dog.

Julia.—Come, Bello! It is no small honor to serve as example in such a discussion.

I.—Truly, the dog is pretty enough, and if the man we are speaking of had the gift of imitation, he would try in some way to make a likeness of it. But let him prosper never so well in his imitation, we are still not advanced, for we have at best only two Bellos instead of one.

Guest.—I will not interrupt, but wait and see what is to become of this.

I.—Suppose that this man, to whom for the sake of his talent we will give the name of Artist, has by no means satisfied himself as yet; that his desire seems to him too narrow, too limited; that he busies himself about more individuals, varieties, kinds, species, in such wise that at last not the creature itself, but the Idea of the creature stands before him, and he is able to express this by means of his art.

Guest.—Bravo! That is just my man, and his work must be characteristic.

I.—No doubt.

Guest.—And there I would stop and go no farther.

I.—But we go beyond this.

Guest.—I stop here.

Uncle.—I will go along for the sake of experiment.

I.—By this operation we may arrive at a canon useful indeed, and scientifically valuable, but not satisfactory to the soul of man.

Guest.—How then are you going to satisfy the fantastic demands of this dear soul?

I.—Not fantastic; it is only not satisfied in its just claims. An old tradition informs us that the Elohim once took counsel together, saying, let us make man after our own image; and man says therefore, with good cause, let us make gods and they shall be in our image.

Guest.—We are getting into a dark region.

I.—There is only one light that can aid us here.

Guest.—And that is?

I.—Reason.

Guest.—How far it be a guide or a will-o'-wisp is hard to say.

I.—We need not give it a name; but let us ask ourselves what are the demands the soul makes of a work of art. It is not enough that it fulfils a limited desire, that it satisfies our curiosity, or gives order and stability to our knowledge; that which is Higher in us must be awakened; we must be inspired with reverence, and feel ourselves worthy of reverence.

Guest.—I begin to be at a loss to comprehend you.

Uncle.—But I think I am able to follow in some measure;—how far, I shall try to make clear by an example. We will suppose our artist had made an eagle in bronze which perfectly expressed the idea of the species, but now he would place him on the sceptre of Jupiter. Do you think it would be perfectly suitable there?

Guest.—It would depend.

Uncle.—I say, No! The artist must first impart to him something beyond all this.

Guest.—What then?

Uncle.—It is hard to express.

Guest.—So I should think.

I.—And yet something may be done by approximation.

Guest.—To it then.

I.—He must give to the eagle what he gave to Jupiter, in order to make him into a God.

Guest.—And this is—

I.—The Godlike,—which in truth we should never become acquainted with, did not man feel and himself reproduce it.

Guest.—I continue to hold my ground, and let you ascend into the clouds. I see that you mean to indi-

cate the high style of the Greeks, which I prize only so far as it is characteristic.

I.—It is something more to us, however; it answers to a high demand, but still not the highest.

Guest.—You seem to be very hard to satisfy.

I.—It beseems him to demand much for whom much is in store. Let me be brief. The human soul is in an exalted position when it reverences, when it adores; when it elevates an object and is elevated by it again. But it cannot remain long in this state. The general concept of genus leaves it cold; the Ideal raises it above itself; but now it must return again into itself; and it would gladly enjoy once more that affection which it then felt for the Individual, without coming back to the same limited view, and will not forego the significant, the spirit-moving. What would become of it now, if Beauty did not step in and happily solve the riddle? She first gives life and warmth to the Scientific, and breathing her softening influence and heavenly charm over even the Significant and the High, brings it back to us again. A beautiful work of art has gone through the entire circle; it becomes again an Individual that we can embrace with affection, that we can make our own.

Guest.—Have you done?

I.—For the present. The little circle is completed; we have come back to our starting point; the soul has made its demands, and those demands have been satisfied. I have nothing further to add. (Here our good uncle was peremptorily called away to a patient.)

Guest.—It is the custom of you philosophic gentlemen to engage in battle behind high-sounding words, as if it were an ægis.

I.—I can assure you that I have not now been speaking as a philosopher. These are mere matters of experience.

Guest.—Do you call that experience, whereof another can comprehend nothing?

I.—To every experience belongs an organ.

Guest.—Do you mean a separate one?

I.—Not a separate one; but it must have one peculiarity.

Guest.—And what is that?

I.—It must be able to produce.

Guest.—Produce what?

I.—The experience! There is no experience which is not brought forth, produced, created.

Guest.—This is too much!

I.—This is particularly the case with artists.

Guest.—Indeed! How enviable would the portrait painter be, what custom would he not have, if he could reproduce all his customers without troubling people with so many sittings!

I.—I am not deterred by your instance, but rather am convinced no portrait can be worth anything that the painter does not in the strictest sense create.

Guest (springing up).—This is maddening! I would you were making game of me, and all this were only in jest. How happy I should be to have the riddle explained in that manner! How gladly would I give my hand to a worthy man like you!

I.—Unfortunately, I am quite in earnest, and cannot come to any other conclusion.

Guest.—Now I did hope that in parting we should take each other's hand, especially since our good host has departed, who would have held the place of me-

diator in your dispute. Farewell, Mademoiselle! Farewell, Sir! I shall inquire to-morrow whether I may wait on you again.

So he stormed out of the door, and Julia had scarce time to send the maid, who was ready with the lantern, after him. I remained alone with the sweet child, for Caroline had disappeared some time before,—I think about the time that my opponent had declared that mere beauty, without character, must be insipid.

You went too far, my friend, said Julia, after a short pause. If he did not seem to me altogether in the right, neither can I give unqualified assent to you; for your last assertion was only made to tease him. The portrait painter must make the likeness a pure creation?

Fair Julia, I replied, how much I could wish to make myself clear to you upon this point. Perhaps in time I shall succeed. But you, whose lively spirit is at home in all regions, who not only prize the artist but in some sense anticipate him, and who know how to give form to what your eyes have never seen, as if it stood bodily before you, you should be the last to start when the question is of creation, of production.

Julia.—I see it is your intention to bribe me. That will not be hard, for I like to listen to you.

I.—Let us think well of man, and not trouble ourselves if what we say of him may sound a little bizarre. Everybody admits that the poet must be born. Does not every one ascribe to genius a creative power, and no one thinks he is repeating a paradox? We do not deny it to works of fancy; but the inactive, the worthless man will not become aware of the good, the noble, the beautiful, either in himself or others. Whence came

it, if it did not spring from ourselves? Ask your own heart. Is not the method of intercourse born with intercourse? Is it not the capacity for good deeds that rejoices over the good deed? Who ever feels keenly without the wish to express that feeling? and what do we express but what we create? and in truth, not once only, that it may exist and there end, but that it may operate, ever increase, and again come to life, and again create. This is the godlike power of love, of the singing and speaking of which there is no end, that it reproduces at every moment the noble qualities of the beloved object, perfects it in the least particulars, embraces it in the whole, rests not by day, sleeps not by night, is enchanted with its own work, is astonished at its own restless activity, ever finds the familiar new, because at every moment it is re-created in the sweetest of all occupations. Yes, the picture of the beloved cannot grow old, for every moment is the moment of its birth.

The maid returned from lighting the stranger. She was highly satisfied with his liberality, for he had given her a handsome *pourboire;* but she praised his politeness still more highly, for he had dismissed her with a friendly word, and, moreover, called her "Pretty Maid."

I was not in a humor to spare him, and exclaimed: "Oh, yes! I can easily credit that one who denies the ideal should take the common for the beautiful."

ON TRUTH AND PROBABILITY IN WORKS OF ART

A Dialogue

(1798)

In a certain German theatre there was represented a sort of oval amphitheatrical structure, with boxes filled with painted spectators, seemingly occupied with what was being transacted below. Many of the real spectators in the pit and boxes were dissatisfied with this, and took it amiss that anything so untrue and improbable was put upon them. Whereupon the conversation took place of which we here give the general purport.

The Agent of the Artist.—Let us see if we cannot by some means agree more nearly.

The Spectator.—I do not see how such a representation can be defended.

Agent.—Tell me, when you go into a theatre, do you not expect all you see to be true and real?

Spectator.—By no means! I only ask that what I see shall appear true and real.

Agent.—Pardon me if I contradict even your inmost conviction and maintain this is by no means the thing you demand.

Spectator.—That is singular! If I did not require this, why should the scene painter take so much pains to draw each line in the most perfect manner, according to the rules of perspective, and rep-

resent every object according to its own peculiar perfection? Why waste so much study on the costume? Why spend so much to insure its truth, so that I may be carried back into those times? Why is that player most highly praised who most truly expresses the sentiment, who in speech, gesture, delivery, comes nearest the truth, who persuades me that I behold not an imitation, but the thing itself?

Agent.—You express your feelings admirably well, but it is harder than you may think to have a right comprehension of our feelings. What would you say if I reply that theatrical representations by no means seem really true to you, but rather to have only an appearance of truth?

Spectator.—I should say that you have advanced a subtlety that is little more than a play upon words.

Agent.—And I maintain that when we are speaking of the operations of the soul, no words can be delicate and subtle enough; and that this sort of play upon words indicates a need of the soul, which, not being able adequately to express what passes within us, seeks to work by way of antithesis, to give an answer to each side of the question, and thus, as it were, to find the mean between them.

Spectator.—Very good. Only explain yourself more fully, and, if you will oblige me, by examples.

Agent.—I shall be glad to avail myself of them. For instance, when you are at an opera, do you not experience a lively and complete satisfaction?

Spectator.—Yes, when everything is in harmony, one of the most complete I know.

Agent.—But when the good people there meet and compliment each other with a song, sing from billets

that they hold in their hands, sing you their love, their hatred, and all their passions, fight singing, and die singing, can you say that the whole representation, or even any part of it, is true? or, I may say, has even an appearance of truth?

Spectator.—In fact, when I consider, I could not say it had. None of these things seems true.

Agent.—And yet you are completely pleased and satisfied with the exhibition?

Spectator.—Beyond question. I still remember how the opera used to be ridiculed on account of this gross improbability, and how I always received the greatest satisfaction from it, in spite of this, and find more and more pleasure the richer and more complete it becomes.

Agent.—And you do not then at the opera experience a complete deception?

Spectator.—Deception, that is not the proper word, —and yet, yes!—But no—

Agent.—Here you are in a complete contradiction, which is far worse than a quibble.

Spectator.—Let us proceed quietly; we shall soon see light.

Agent.—As soon as we come into the light, we shall agree. Having reached this point, will you allow me to ask you some questions?

Spectator.—It is your duty, having questioned me into this dilemma, to question me out again.

Agent.—The feeling you have at the exhibition of an opera cannot be rightly called deception?

Spectator.—I agree. Still it is a sort of deception; something nearly allied to it.

Agent.—Tell me, do you not almost forget yourself?

Spectator.—Not almost, but quite, when the whole or some part is excellent.

Agent.—You are enchanted?

Spectator.—It has happened more than once.

Agent.—Can you explain under what circumstances?

Spectator.—Under so many, it would be hard to tell.

Agent.—Yet you have already told when it is most apt to happen, namely, when all is in harmony.

Spectator.—Undoubtedly.

Agent.—Did this complete representation harmonize with itself or some other natural product?

Spectator.—With itself, certainly.

Agent.—And this harmony was a work of art?

Spectator.—It must have been.

Agent.—We have denied to the opera the possession of a certain sort of truth. We have maintained that it is by no means faithful to what it professes to represent. But can we deny to it a certain interior truth, which arises from its completeness as a work of art?

Spectator.—When the opera is good, it creates a little world of its own, in which all proceeds according to fixed laws, which must be judged by its own laws, felt according to its own spirit.

Agent.—Does it not follow from this, that truth of nature and truth of art are two distinct things, and that the artist neither should nor may endeavor to give his work the air of a work of nature?

Spectator.—But yet it has so often the air of a work of nature.

Agent.—That I cannot deny. But may I on the other hand be equally frank?

Spectator.—Why not? our business is not now with compliments.

Agent.—I will then venture to affirm, that a work of art can seem to be a work of nature only to a wholly uncultivated spectator; such a one the artist appreciates and values indeed, though he stands on the lowest step. But, unfortunately, he can only be satisfied when the artist descends to his level; he will never rise with him, when, prompted by his genius, the true artist must take wing in order to complete the whole circle of his work.

Spectator.—Your remark is curious; but proceed.

Agent.—You would not let it pass unless you had yourself attained a higher step.

Spectator.—Let me now make trial, and take the place of questioner, in order to arrange and advance our subject.

Agent.—I shall like that better still.

Spectator.—You say that a work of art could appear as a work of nature only to an uncultivated person?

Agent.—Certainly. You remember the birds that tried to eat the painted cherries of the great master?

Spectator.—Now does not that show that the cherries were admirably painted?

Agent.—By no means. It rather convinces me that these connoisseurs were true sparrows.

Spectator.—I cannot, however, for this reason concede that this work could have been other than excellent.

Agent.—Shall I tell you a more modern story?

Spectator.—I would rather listen to stories than arguments.

Agent.—A certain great naturalist, among other domesticated animals, possessed an ape, which he missed one day, and found after a long search in the library. There sat the beast on the ground, with the plates of an unbound work of Natural History scattered about him. Astonished at this zealous fit of study on the part of his familiar, the gentleman approached, and found, to his wonder and vexation, that the dainty ape had been making his dinner of the beetles that were pictured in various places.

Spectator.—It is a droll story.

Agent.—And seasonable, I hope. You would not compare these colored copperplates with the work of so great an artist?

Spectator.—No, indeed.

Agent.—But you would reckon the ape among the uncultivated amateurs?

Spectator.—Yes, and among the greedy ones! You awaken in me a singular idea. Does not the uncultivated amateur, just in the same way, desire a work to be natural, that he may be able to enjoy it in a natural, which is often a vulgar and common way?

Agent.—I am entirely of that opinion.

Spectator.—And you maintain, therefore, that an artist lowers himself when he tries to produce this effect?

Agent.—Such is my firm conviction.

Spectator.—But here again I feel a contradiction. You did me just now the honor to number me, at least, among the half-cultivated spectators.

Agent.—Among those who are on the way to become true connoisseurs.

Spectator.—Then explain to me, Why does a perfect work of art appear like a work of nature to me also?

Agent.—Because it harmonizes with your better nature. Because it is above natural, yet not unnatural. A perfect work of art is a work of the human soul, and in this sense, also, a work of nature. But because it collects together the scattered objects, of which it displays even the most minute in all their significance and value, it is above nature. It is comprehensible only by a mind that is harmoniously formed and developed, and such an one discovers that what is perfect and complete in itself is also in harmony with himself. The common spectator, on the contrary, has no idea of it; he treats a work of art as he would any object he meets with in the market. But the true connoisseur sees not only the truth of the imitation, but also the excellence of the selection, the refinement of the composition, the superiority of the little world of art; he feels that he must rise to the level of the artist, in order to enjoy his work; he feels that he must collect himself out of his scattered life, must live with the work of art, see it again and again, and through it receive a higher existence.

Spectator.—Well said, my friend. I have often made similar reflections upon pictures, the drama, and other species of poetry, and had an instinct of those things you require. I will in future give more heed both to myself and to works of art. But if I am not mistaken, we have left the subject of our dispute quite behind. You wished to persuade me that the painted spectators at our opera are admissible, and I do not

yet see, though we have come to an agreement, by what arguments you mean to support this license, and under what rubric I am to admit these painted lookers-on.

Agent.—Fortunately, the opera is repeated to-night; I trust you will not miss it.

Spectator.—On no account.

Agent.—And the painted men?

Spectator.—Shall not drive me away, for I think myself something more than a sparrow.

Agent.—I hope that a mutual interest may soon bring us together again.

SIMPLE IMITATION OF NATURE, MANNER, STYLE

(1789)

It does not seem to be superfluous to define clearly the meaning we attach to these words, which we shall often have occasion to make use of. For, however long we may have been in the habit of using them, and however they may seem to have been defined in theoretical works, still every one continues to use them in a way of his own, and means more or less by them, according to the degree of clearness or uncertainty with which he has seized the ideas they express.

Simple Imitation of Nature

If an artist, in whom we must of course suppose a natural talent, is in the first stage of progress, and after having in some measure practised eye and hand, turns to natural objects, uses all care and fidelity in the most perfect imitation of their forms and colors, never knowingly departs from nature, begins and ends in her presence every picture that he undertakes,—such an artist must possess high merit, for he cannot fail of attaining the greatest accuracy, and his work must be full of certainty, variety and strength.

If these conditions are clearly considered, it will be easily seen that a capable but limited talent can in this way treat agreeable but limited subjects.

Such subjects must always be easy to find. Leisurely observation and quiet imitation must be allowed for; the disposition that occupies itself in such works must be a quiet one, self-contained, and satisfied with moderate gratification.

This sort of imitation will thus be practised by men of quiet, true, limited nature, in the representation of dead or still-life subjects. It does not by its nature exclude a high degree of perfection.

Manner

But man finds, usually, such a mode of proceeding too timid and inadequate. He perceives a harmony among many objects, which can only be brought into a picture by sacrificing the individual. He gets tired of using Nature's letters each time to spell after her. He invents a way, devises a language for himself, so as to express in his own fashion the idea his soul has attained, and give to the object he has so many times repeated a distinctive form, without having recourse to nature itself each time he repeats it, or even without recalling exactly the individual form.

Thus a language is created, in which the mind of the speaker expresses and utters itself immediately; and as in each individual who thinks, the conceptions of spiritual objects are formed and arranged differently, so will every artist of this class see, understand, and imitate the outward world in a different manner, will seize its phenomena with a more or less observant eye, and reproduce them more accurately or loosely.

We see that this species of imitation is applied with the best effect in cases where a great whole compre-

hends many subordinate objects. These last must be sacrificed in order to attain the general expression of the whole, as is the case in landscapes, for instance, where the aim would be missed if we attended too closely to the details, instead of keeping in view the idea of the whole.

Style

When at last art, by means of imitation of Nature, of efforts to create a common language, and of clear and profound study of objects themselves, has acquired a clearer and clearer knowledge of the peculiarities of objects and their mode of being, oversees the classes of forms, and knows how to connect and imitate those that are distinct and characteristic,—then will *Style* reach the highest point it is capable of, the point where it may be placed on a par with the highest efforts of the human mind.

Simple Imitation springs from quiet existence and an agreeable subject; Manner seizes with facile capacity upon an appearance; Style rests upon the deepest foundations of knowledge, upon the essence of things, so far as we are able to recognize it in visible and comprehensible forms.

The elaboration of what we have advanced above would fill whole volumes; and much is said upon the subject in books, but a true conception of it can only be arrived at by the study of nature and works of art. We subjoin some additional considerations, and shall have occasion to refer to these remarks whenever plastic art is in question.

It is easy to see that these three several ways of

producing works of art are closely related, and that one may imperceptibly run into the others.

The simple imitation of subjects of easy comprehension (we shall take fruits and flowers as an example) may be carried to a high point of perfection. It is natural that he who paints roses should soon learn to distinguish and select the most beautiful, and seek for such only among the thousand that summer affords. Thus we have arrived at selection, although the artist may have formed no general idea of the beauty of roses. He has to do with comprehensible forms; everything depends upon the manifold purpose and the color of the surface. The downy peach, the finely dusted plum, the smooth apple, the burnished cherry, the dazzling rose, the manifold pink, the variegated tulip, all these he can have at will in his quiet studio in the perfection of their bloom and ripeness. He can put them in a favorable light; his eye will become accustomed to the harmonious play of glittering colors; each year would give him a fresh opportunity of renewing the same models, and he would be enabled, without laborious abstraction, by means of quiet imitative observation, to know and seize the peculiarities of the simple existence of these subjects. In this way were produced the masterpieces of a Huysum and Rachel Ruysch, artists who seem almost to have accomplished the impossible. It is evident that an artist of this sort must become greater and more characteristic, if in addition to his talent, he is also acquainted with botany; if he knows, from the root up, the influences of the several parts upon the expansion and growth of the plant, their office, and reciprocal action; if he understands and reflects upon the successive development of leaves,

fruit, flowers, and the new germ. By this means he will not only exhibit his taste in the selection of superficial appearance, but will at once win admiration and give instruction through a correct representation of properties. In this wise it might be said that he had formed a style; while, on the other hand, it is easy to see how such a master, if he proceeded with less thoroughness, if he endeavored to give only the striking and dazzling, would soon pass into mannerism.

Simple Imitation therefore labors in the ante-chamber that leads to Style. In proportion to the truth, care, and purity with which it goes to work, the composure with which it examines and feels, the calmness with which it proceeds to imitate, the degree of reflection it uses, that is to say, with which it learns to compare the like and separate the unlike, and to arrange separate objects under one general idea,—will be its title to step upon the threshold of the sanctuary itself.

If now we consider Manner more carefully, we shall see that it may be, in the highest sense and purest signification of the word, the middle ground between simple imitation of nature and style.

The nearer it approaches, with its more facile treatment, to faithful imitation and on the other side, the more earnestly it endeavors to seize and comprehensibly express the character of objects, the more it strives, by means of a pure, lively, and active individuality, to combine the two, the higher, greater, and more worthy of respect it will become. But if such an artist ceases to hold fast by and reflect upon nature, he will soon lose sight of the true principles of art, and his manner will become more and more empty and insignificant in

proportion as he leaves behind simple imitation and style.

We need not here repeat that we use the word Manner in a high and honorable sense, so that artists who, according to our definition, would be termed Mannerists have nothing to complain of. It is only incumbent upon us to preserve the word Style in the highest honor, in order to have an expression for the highest point art has attained or ever can attain. To be aware of this point is in itself a great good fortune, and to enter upon its consideration in company with sensible people, a noble pleasure, for which we hope to have many opportunities in the sequel.

ANCIENT AND MODERN

(1818)

I HAVE been obliged, in what precedes, to say so much in favor of antiquity, and particularly of the plastic artists of those times, that I may possibly be misunderstood, which so often happens where the reader, instead of preserving a just balance, throws himself at once into the opposite scale. I therefore seize the present opportunity to explain my meaning, using plastic art as a symbol of the never-ceasing life of human actions and affairs.

A young friend, Karl Ernst Schubarth, in his pamphlet, *A Critique on Goethe*, which in every respect calls for my esteem and thanks, says: "I do not agree with those worshipers of the ancients, among whom is Goethe himself, who maintain that in high and complete development of humanity nothing has ever been arrived at to compare with the Greeks." Fortunately, Schubarth's own words give us an opportunity to adjust this difference, where he says, "As to our Goethe, let me say that I prefer Shakespeare to him, for this reason,—that in Shakespeare I seem to find a strong, unconscious man, who is able, with perfect certainty, and without reasoning, reflecting, subtilizing and classifying, to seize with never-failing hand the true and false in man, and express it quite naturally; whilst in Goethe, though I recognize the same ultimate aim, I am always fighting with obstacles, and must be always

taking heed lest I accept for plain truth what is only an exhibition of plain error."

Here our friend hits the nail on the head; for in that very point where he places me below Shakespeare do we stand below the ancients. And what is it we advance concerning the ancients? Any talent, the development of which is not favored by time and circumstances, and must on that account work its way through a thousand obstacles, and get rid of a thousand errors, must always be at a disadvantage, when compared with a contemporary one that has the opportunity to cultivate itself with facility and act to the extent of its capacity without opposition.

It often happens that people who are no longer young are able, out of the fullness of their experience, to furnish an illustration that will explain or strengthen an assertion; and this is my excuse for relating the following anecdote. A practised diplomatist who had desired my acquaintance, after the first interview, when he had had but little opportunity of seeing or conversing with me, remarked to his friends: "Voilà un homme qui a eu de grands chagrins!" These words set me to thinking. The skilful physiognomist's eye did not deceive him, only he laid to the effect of suffering the phenomenon that should also have been ascribed to opposition. An observant, straightforward German might have said, "Here is a man who has had a very hard time of it." Since, then, the signs of past endurance and of persevering activity do not disappear from the face, it is no wonder if all that remains of us and our strivings should bear the same impress, and indicate, to the attentive observer, a mode of being whose aim has been to preserve its balance alike under circum-

stances of happiest development or narrowest limitation, and to maintain the stubbornness, if it could not always the highest dignity, of human existence.

But letting pass old and new, past and present, we may in general assert that every artistic production places us in the same state of mind the author was in. If that was clear and bright, we shall feel free; if that was narrow, timid, or anxious, we shall feel limited in the same proportion.

Upon reflection, we should add that this refers only to treatment. Material and import do not enter into consideration. If we bear in mind this principle, and look around in the world of art, we maintain that every work will afford us pleasure which the artist himself produced with ease and facility. What amateur does not rejoice in the possession of a successful drawing or etching of our Chodowiecki? We see in them such an immediate apprehension of nature, as we know it, that they leave nothing to wish for. But he would not be able to go beyond his mark and line, without losing all the advantage he derives from his peculiar qualifications.

We shall even go farther, and confess that we have derived great pleasure from Mannerists, when the manner has not been carried too far, and that we are pleased with the possession of their works. The artists who have received this name have been gifted with uncommon talent, but became early aware that, in the state of the times as well as of the schools into which they were cast by fate, there was no room for minute labor, but that they must choose their part, and perfect themselves speedily. They therefore made themselves a language, into which they could, without far-

ther trouble, translate with ease and dexterity all visible subjects, and exhibit to us representations of all sorts of scenes with greater or less success. Thus whole nations have been entertained and hoodwinked for long periods of time, until at last one or another artist has found the way back to nature and a higher feeling of art.

We may perceive, by the Herculanean antiquities, how the ancients also fell into this kind of manner; only their models were too great, too present, fresh, and well preserved, for their second and third rate artists to be able to lose themselves entirely in insignificance.

Let us now assume a higher and more agreeable point of view, and consider the talent with which Raphael was so singularly gifted. Born with the happiest natural gifts, at a time when art combined the most conscientious labor, attention, industry, and truth, the young man was already led by excellent masters to the threshold, and had only to raise his foot to enter the temple. Disciplined by Perugino in the most careful elaboration, his genius was developed by Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo. Neither of these artists, in spite of their long life and the cultivation of their powers, seems ever to have reached the true enjoyment of artistic production. The former, if we look closely, wearied himself with thought, and dissipated his powers in mechanical inquiries; and we have to blame the latter for spending his fairest years among stone quarries, getting out marble blocks and slabs, so that, instead of carrying out his intention of carving all the heroes of the Old and New Testament, he has left only his Moses as an example of what he could and should have done. Raphael, however, during his whole life,

ever increased in the even facility of his work. We see in him the development of the intellectual and active powers, which preserve such remarkable balance that it may be affirmed that no modern artist has possessed such purity and completeness of thought and such clearness of expression. In him we have another instance of a talent that pours out to us the freshest water from the purest source. He never affects a Greek manner, but feels, thinks, works like a Greek. We see the fairest talent developed in the most favorable hours. The same thing occurred, under like conditions and circumstances, in the time of Pericles.

It may therefore always be maintained that native talent is indeed indispensable to production, but equally indispensable is a commensurate development in the provinces of nature and art. Art cannot dispense with its prerogatives, and cannot achieve perfection without favorable outward circumstances.

Consider the school of the Caracci. Here was a ground-work of talent, earnestness, industry, and consistent development; here was an element for the natural and artistic development of admirable powers. We see a whole dozen of excellent artists produced by it, each practising and cultivating his peculiar talent according to the same general idea, so that it hardly seems possible that after times should produce anything similar.

Let us consider the immense stride made by the highly gifted Rubens into the world of art! He too was no son of earth; look at the rich inheritance he was heir to, from the old masters of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, through all the admirable artists of the sixteenth, at the close of which he was born.

Again, think of the crowd of Dutch painters of the seventeenth century, whose great abilities found development now at home, now south, now north, until we can no longer deny the incredible sagacity with which their eye pierced into nature, and the facility with which they have succeeded in expressing her legitimate charm, so as to enchant us everywhere. Nay, in proportion as we possess their productions, we are willing to limit ourselves for long stretches of time to their study and admiration, and are far from blaming those amateurs who are contented with the possession and enjoyment of this class of pictures exclusively.

In the same way, we could bring a hundred examples in support of our assertion. To see distinctly, to apprehend clearly, to impart with facility,—these are the qualities that enchant us; and when we maintain that all these are to be found in the genuine Greek works, united with the noblest subjects, the most unerring and perfect execution, it will be seen why it is we always begin and end with them. Let each one be a Greek in his own way, but let him be a *Greek!*

The same is true of literary merit. What is comprehensible is always the first to attract us and give us complete satisfaction. If we even take the works of one and the same poet, we shall find some that seem to indicate a degree of laborious effort, and others again affect us like natural products, because the talent was commensurate with the form and import. And once more, it is our firm belief that although any age may give birth to the fairest talent, it is not given to all to be able to develop it in its perfect proportions.

NOTES ON DILETTANTISM

(1799)

Dilettantism presupposes Art, as botch-work does handicraft.—Idea of Artist, in opposition to Dilettante.—Practice of Art scientifically.—Adoption of an Objective Art.—Legitimate progress and advancement.—Calling and profession.—Connection with a world of Art and Artists.—Schools.

The Dilettante does not hold the same relation to all the arts.

All the arts have an objective and a subjective side, and according as one or the other of these is predominant, the Dilettante has value or not.

Where the subjective of itself is of great importance, the Dilettante must and can approximate to the artist. For instance, oratory, lyrical poetry, music, dance.

Where the reverse is the case, there is a more marked distinction between Artist and Dilettante, as in architecture, the arts of design, epic and dramatic poetry.

Art itself gives laws, and commands the time.

Dilettantism follows the lead of the time.

When masters in art follow a false taste, the Dilettante expects so much the sooner to reach the level of art.

The Dilettante, receiving his first impulse to self-production from the effect of works of art on him, confounds these effects with the objective causes and mo-

tives, and would now make the state of feeling he has been put into productive and practical; as if out of the fragrance of flowers one should try to reproduce flowers themselves.

The *speaking to the feelings*, the last effect of all poetical organization, but which presupposes the concurrences of the whole of art, seems to the Dilettante to be the thing itself, and out of it he endeavors to produce.

In general, the Dilettante, in his ignorance of himself, puts the passive in the place of the active, and because he receives a lively impression from effects, thinks from these impressed effects to produce other effects.

The peculiar want of the Dilettante is *Architectonic*, in the highest sense,—that practical power which creates, forms, constitutes. Of this he has only a sort of misgiving, and submits himself to his material, instead of commanding it.

It will be found that the Dilettante runs particularly to neatness, which is the completion of the thing in hand, wherefrom a sort of illusion arises, as if the thing itself were worthy of existing. The same holds true of accuracy (*accuratesse*), and all the last conditions of Form, which can just as well accompany the formless.

General principles on which Dilettantism is allowable:—

When the Dilettante subjects himself to the severest rules at the outset, and undertakes to complete all the successive steps with the greatest strictness,—which he can the better afford to do, inasmuch as (1) the goal is not demanded of him; and, (2) if he wishes to

retreat, he has prepared the surest path to connoisseurship.

In opposition to the general maxim, the Dilettante will thus be subject to more severe criticism than the Artist, who, resting upon a secure basis of art, incurs less danger in departing from rules, and may even by that means enlarge the province of art itself. The true artist rests firmly and securely upon himself. His endeavor, his mark, is the highest aim of art. In his own estimation he will always be far from that aim, and necessarily, therefore, will be always modest in regard to art or the idea of art, and will maintain that he has as yet accomplished little, no matter how excellent his work may be, or how high his consciousness of superiority, in reference to the world, may reach. Dilettanti, or real botchers, seem, on the other hand, not to strive towards an aim, not to see what is beyond, but only what is beside them. On this account they are always comparing, are for the most part extravagant in their praise, unskilful where they blame, have an infinite deference for their like, thus giving themselves an air of friendliness and fairness, which is in fact only to exalt themselves.

Dilettantism in Lyrical Poetry

The fact that the German language was in the beginning applied to poetry, not by any one great poetic genius, but through merely middling heads, must inspire Dilettantism with confidence to essay itself in it.

The cultivation of French literature and language has made even Dilettanti more artistic.

The French were always more rigorous, tended to

severer correctness, and demanded even of Dilettanti taste and spirit within, and externally a faultless diction.—In England, Dilettantism held more by Latin and Greek.—Sonnets of the Italians.

Impudence of the latest Dilettantism, originated and maintained through reminiscences of a richly cultivated poetic dialect, and the facility of a good mechanical exterior.

Polite literature of universities, induced by a modern method of study.—Lady poems.—Schöngeisterei (bel esprit).—Annual *Keepsakes*.—Musenalmanache.—Journals.—Beginning and spread of translations.

Immediate transition from the classes and the university to authorship.—Epoch of ballads, and songs of the people.—Gessner, poetic prose.—Imitation of the bards.—Bürger's influence on sing-song.—Rhymeless verses. — Klopstockean odes. — Claudius. — Wieland's laxity.—In earlier times: Latin verses; pedantism; more handicraft; skill, without poetic spirit.

Dilettantism in Pragmatic Poetry

Reasons why the Dilettante hates the powerful, the passionate, the characteristic, and only represents the middling, the moral.

The Dilettante never paints the object, but only the feeling it gives rise to in him.

He avoids the character of the object.

All Dilettante creations in this style of poetry will have a pathological character, and express only the attractions and repulsions felt by their author.

The Dilettante thinks to reach poetry by means of his wits.

Dramatic botchers go mad when they desire to give effect to their work.

Dilettantism in Dramatic Art

French comedy is, even among amateurs, *obligato*, and a social institution.

Italian amateur-comedy is founded on a puppet, or puppet-like, representation.

Germany, in former times, Jesuit-schools.

In later times: French amateur-comedies, for aiding the cultivation of the language, in noble houses.

Mixing up of ranks in German amateur-comedy.

Conditions, under which, perhaps, a moderate practice in theatrical matters may be harmless and allowable, or even in some measure advantageous:

Permanence of the same company.

To avoid passionate pieces, and choose such as are reflective and social.

To admit no children or very young persons.

Greatest possible strictness in outward forms.

Advantages of Dilettantism in General

It prevents an entire want of cultivation.

Dilettantism is a necessary consequence of a general extension of art, and may even be a cause of it.

It can, under certain circumstances, help to excite and develop a true artistic talent.

Elevates handicraft to a certain resemblance to art.

Has a civilizing tendency.

In case of crude ignorance, it stimulates a certain taste for art, and extends it to where the artist would not be able to reach.

Gives occupation to productive power, and cultivates something serious in man.

Appearances are changed into ideas.

Teaches to analyze impressions.

Aids the appropriation and reproduction of forms.

In Lyrical Poetry

Cultivation of language in general.

More manifold interest "in humanioribus," in contrast to the crudeness of the ignorant, or the pedantic narrowness of the mere man of business or pedant.

Cultivation of the feelings and of the verbal expression of the same.

The cultivated man ought to be able to express his feelings with poetic beauty.

Idealization of concepts regarding objects of common life. Cultivation of the imagination, especially as an integral part of the culture of the intellect.

Awaking and direction of the productive imagination to the highest functions of the mind in the sciences and practical life.

Cultivation of the sense of the rhythmical.

There being no objective laws, either for the internal or external construction of a poem, the amateur ought to hold fast to acknowledged models much more strongly than the master does, and rather imitate the good that exists than strive after originality; and in the external and metrical parts, follow strictly the well-known general rules.

And as the Dilettante can only form himself after models, he ought, in order to avoid one-sidedness, to acquire the most universal knowledge of all models, and

survey the field of poetic literature even more perfectly than is required of the artist himself.

In the Dramatic Art

Opportunity of farther cultivation in declamation.
Attention to one's own representations.
Participates in the advantages predicated of Dancing.
Exercise of the Memory.
Sensuous attention and accuracy.

Disadvantage of Dilettantism in General

The Dilettante jumps over the steps, stops at certain steps which he regards as the end, and from which he thinks himself justified in judging of the whole; this prevents his perfectibility.

He subjects himself to the necessity of working by false rules, because he cannot work even as a Dilettante without some rules, and he does not understand the true objective rules.

He departs more and more from the truth of objects, and loses himself in subjective errors.

Dilettantism deprives art of its element, and spoils art's public by depriving it of its earnestness and strictness.

All tendency to easy contentment destroys art, and Dilettantism brings in indulgence and favor. At the expense of the true artists, it brings into notice those that stand nearest to Dilettantism.

With Dilettantism the loss is always greater than the gain.

From handicraft the way is open to rise to art, but not from botch-work.

Dilettantism favors the indifferent, partial, and characterless.

Injury Dilettanti do to art by bringing artists down to their level.

Can bear no good artist near them.

In all cases where the art itself has no proper regulative power, as in Poetry, the art of Gardening, acting, the injury Dilettantism does is greater, and its pretensions more arrogant. The worst case is that of histrionic art.

In Lyrical Poetry

Belletristic shallowness and emptiness, withdrawal from solid studies, or superficial treatment.

A greater danger exists in this than in the other arts of mistaking a merely Dilettante dexterity for a true genius for art, and in this case, the subject is worse off than in any other Dilettantism, because its existence becomes an entire nullity; for the poet is nothing at all except through earnestness and conformity to art.

Dilettantism in general, but especially in poetry, weakens the feeling and perception for the good that lies beyond it, and whilst it is indulgent to a restless desire to produce, which leads it to nothing perfect, robs itself of all the culture it might derive through the perception of foreign excellences.

Poetical Dilettantism may be of two sorts. Either it neglects the (indispensable) mechanical, and thinks enough done if it shows mind and feeling; or it seeks poetry only in the mechanical, acquiring a technical dexterity therein, but without spirit or significance. Both

are injurious, but the former rather injures the art, and the latter the subject.

All Dilettanti are Plagiarists. They enervate and pull to pieces all that is original in manner or matter, and at the same time imitate, copy, and piece out their own emptiness with it. Thus the language gets filled with phrases and formulae stolen from all sides, which have no longer any meaning, and you may read whole books written in a fine *style* and containing nothing. In a word, all that is really beautiful and good in true poetry is profaned, rendered common, and degraded.

In Pragmatical Poetry

All the disadvantages of Dilettantism in Lyrical Poetry apply here in a far higher degree. Not the art alone, but the subject also, suffers more.

Mixing up of different kinds.

In Histrionic Art

Caricature of one's own faulty individuality.

Incapacitates the mind for all occupation, through the illusion of a fantastic mode of viewing objects.

Expense of interest and passion, without fruit.

Eternal circle of monotonous, ever repeated, ineffectual activity.

(There is nothing so attractive to Dilettanti as rehearsals. Professional actors hate them.)

Special forbearance and pampering of theatrical Dilettanti with applause.

Eternal stimulation towards a passionate condition and behavior, without balance.

Feeding all hateful passions, with the worst results for civic and domestic existence.

Blunting the feeling for poetry.

Use of exalted language for commonplace sentiments.

A rag-fair of thoughts, commonplaces, and descriptions in the memory.

Pervading affectation and mannerism, reaching also into life.

Most injurious indulgence towards the indifferent and faulty, in a public and quite personal case.

The general tolerance for the home-made becomes in this case more pronounced.

Most pernicious use of amateur comedies for the education of children, where it turns into caricature. In the same manner, the most dangerous of all amusements for universities, &c.

Destruction of the ideality of art, because the Dilettante, not being able to raise himself through the appropriation of artistic ideas and traditions, must do all through a pathological reality.

THE THEORY OF LITERATURE

THE PRODUCTION OF A NATIONAL CLASSIC[1]

(*Literarischer Sansculottismus*)

(1795)

Those who consider it an absolute duty to connect definite concepts with the words which they employ in speaking and writing will very rarely use the expressions, "classical author" and "classical work."

What are the conditions that produce a classical national author? He must, in the first place, be born in a great commonwealth, which after a series of great and historic events has become a happy and unified nation. He must find in his countrymen loftiness of disposition, depth of feeling, and vigor and consistency of action. He must be thoroughly pervaded with the national spirit, and through his innate genius feel capable of sympathizing with the past as well as the present. He must find his nation in a high state of civilization, so that he will have no difficulty in obtaining for himself a high degree of culture. He must find much material already collected and ready for his use, and a large number of more or less perfect attempts made by his predecessors. And finally, there must be such a happy conjuncture of outer and inner circumstances that he will not have to pay dearly for his mistakes, but that in the prime of his life he may be able

[1] Reply to a critic who complained of "the poverty of the Germans in great classical prose works," and indiscriminately attacked all the writers of the time.

to see the possibilities of a great theme and to develop it according to some uniform plan into a well-arranged and well-constructed literary work.

If any one, who is endowed with clearness of vision and fairness of mind, contrasts these conditions under which alone a classic writer, especially a classic prose-writer, is possible, with the conditions under which the best Germans of this century have worked, he will respect and admire what they have succeeded in doing, and notice with tactful regret in what they have failed.

An important piece of writing, like an important speech, can only be the outgrowth of actual life. The author no more than the man of action can fashion the conditions under which he is born and under which he acts. Each one, even the greatest genius, suffers in some respects from the social and political conditions of his age, just as in other respects he benefits by them. And only from a real nation can a national writer of the highest order be expected. It is unfair, however, to reproach the German nation because, though closely held together by its geographical position, it is divided politically. We do not wish for Germany those political revolutions which might prepare the way for classical works.

And so any criticism which approaches the question from such a false point of view is most unfair. The critic must look at our conditions, as they were and as they now are; he must consider the individual circumstances under which German writers obtained their training, and he will easily find the correct point of view. There is nowhere in Germany a common centre of social culture, where men of letters might gather together and perfect themselves, each one in his par-

ticular field, in conformity with the same standard. Born in the most widely scattered portions of the land, educated in the most diverse ways, left almost entirely to themselves or to impressions derived from the most varied environments, carried away by a special liking for this or that example of German or foreign literature, the German men of letters are forced, without any guidance, to indulge in all sorts of experiments, even in botch-work, in order to try their powers. Only gradually and after considerable reflection do they realize what they ought to do. Practice alone teaches them what they can do. Again and again the bad taste of a large public, which devours the bad and the good with equal pleasure, leads them into doubt. Then again an acquaintance with the educated though widely scattered population of the great empire encourages them, and the common labors and endeavors of their contemporaries fortify them. Such are the conditions under which German writers finally reach man's estate. Then concern for their own support, concern for a family, force them to look about in the world at large, and often with the most depressing feeling, to do work for which they have no respect themselves, in order to earn a livelihood, so that they can devote themselves to that kind of work with which alone their cultured minds would occupy themselves. What German author of note will not recognize himself in this picture, and will not confess with modest regret that he often enough sighed for an opportunity to subordinate sooner the peculiarities of his original genius to a general national culture, which unfortunately did not exist?

For foreign customs and literatures, irrespective of the many advantages they have contributed to the ad-

vancement of the higher classes, have prevented the Germans from developing sooner as Germans.

And now let us look at the work of German poets and prose-writers of recognized ability. With what care and what devotion did they not follow in their labors an enlightened conviction! It is, for example, not saying too much, when we maintain that a capable and industrious literary critic, through a comparison of all the editions of our Wieland,—a man of whom we may proudly boast in spite of the snarling of all our literary parasites,—could develop the whole theory of good taste simply from the successive corrections of this author, who has so indefatigably worked toward his own improvement. We hope that every librarian will take pains to have such a collection made, while it is still possible, and then the next century will know how to make grateful use of it.

In the future we may perhaps be bold enough to lay before the public a history of the development of our foremost writers, as it is shown in their works. We do not expect any confessions, but if they would only themselves impart to us, as far as they see fit, those facts which contributed most to their development, and those which stood most in the way of it, the influence of the good they have done would become still more far-reaching.

For if we consider what superficial critics take least notice of,—the good fortune which young men of talent enjoy nowadays in being able to develop earlier, and to attain sooner a pure style appropriate to the subject at hand,—to whom do they owe it but to their predecessors in the last half of this century, each of whom in his own way has trained himself with unceasing en-

deavor amidst all sorts of hindrances? Through this circumstance a sort of invisible school has sprung up, and the young man who now enters it gets into a much larger and brighter circle than the earlier author, who had to roam through it first himself in the faint light of dawn, in order to help widen it gradually and as it were only by chance. The pseudo-critic, who would light the way for us with his little lamp, comes much too late; the day has dawned, and we shall not close our shutters again.

Men do not give vent to their ill humor in good society; and he must be in a very bad humor, who at this present moment, when almost everybody writes well, denies that Germany has writers of the first order. One does not need to go far to find an agreeable novel, a clever sketch, a clearly written essay on this or that subject. What proof do not our critical papers, journals, and compends furnish of a uniformly good style? The Germans show a more and more thorough mastery of facts, and the arrangement of the material steadily gains in clearness. A dignified philosophy, in spite of all the opposition of wavering opinions, makes them more and more acquainted with their intellectual powers, and facilitates the use of them. The numerous examples of style, the preliminary labors and endeavors of so many men, enable a young man now sooner to present with clearness and grace and in an appropriate manner what he has received from without and developed within himself. Thus a healthy and fair-minded German sees the writers of his nation at a fair stage of development, and is convinced that the public, too, will not let itself be misled by an ill-humored criticaster. Such a one ought to be barred from society, from

which every one should be excluded whose destructive work might only make productive writers disheartened, the sympathetic public listless, and the onlookers distrustful and indifferent.

GOETHE'S THEORY OF A WORLD LITERATURE

I (1827)

EVERYWHERE we hear and read of the progress of the human race, of the broader view of international and human relations. Since it is not my office here to define or qualify these broad generalities, I shall merely acquaint my friends with my conviction that there is being formed a universal world-literature, in which an honorable rôle is reserved for us Germans. All the nations review our work; they praise, censure, accept, and reject, imitate and misrepresent us, open or close their hearts to us. All this we must accept with equanimity, since this attitude, taken as a whole, is of great value to us.

We experience the same thing from our own countrymen, and why should the nations agree among themselves if fellow-citizens do not understand how to unite and coöperate with each other? In a literary sense we have a good start of the other nations; they will always be learning to prize us more, even if they only show it by borrowing from us without thanks, and making use of us without giving recognition of the fact.

As the military and physical strength of a nation develops from its internal unity and cohesion, so must its aesthetic and ethical strength grow gradually from a similar unanimity of feeling and ideas. This, however, can only be accomplished with time. I look back

as a coöperator in this work over many years and reflect how a German literature has been brought together out of heterogeneous, if not conflicting, elements, —a literature which for that reason is only peculiarly *one* in the sense that it is composed in *one* language,— which, however, out of a variety of wholly different talents and abilities, minds and actions, criticisms and undertakings, gradually draws out to the light of day the true inner soul of a people.

II (1827)

My sanguine suggestion that our present active epoch with its increasing communication between the nations might soon hope for a world-literature has been taken up by chance by our neighbors of the west, who indeed can accomplish great things in this same direction. They express themselves on the subject in the following manner:

Le Globe, Tome V., No. 91.

"Every nation indeed, when its turn comes, feels that tension which, like the attractive power of physical bodies, draws one towards the other, and eventually will unite in one universal sympathy all the races of which humanity consists. The endeavor of scholars to understand one another and compare one another's work is by no means new; the Latin language in former times has provided an admirable vehicle for this purpose. But however they labored and strove, the barriers by which peoples were separated began to divide them also, and hurt their intellectual intercourse. The instrument of which they made use could only satisfy a

certain range and course of ideas, so that they touched each other only through the intellect, instead of directly through the feelings and through poetry. Travel, the study of languages, periodical literature, have taken the place of that universal language, and establish many intimate and harmonious relations which *it* could never cultivate. Even the nations that devote themselves chiefly to trade and industry are most concerned with this exchange of ideas. England, whose home activity is so tremendous, whose life is so busy, that it seems as if it would be able to study nothing but itself, at the present time is showing a symptom of this need and desire to broaden its connection with the outside world and widen its horizon. Its Reviews, with which we are already familiar, are not enough for them; two new periodicals, devoted especially to foreign literature, and coöperating together towards that end, are to appear regularly."

Of the first of these English journals, *The Foreign Quarterly Review*, there are already two volumes in our hands; the third we expect directly, and we shall in the course of these pages often refer to the views of important men who are giving proof, with so much insight and industry, of their interest in foreign literature.

But first of all we must confess that it made us smile to see, at the end of the old year, more than thirty literary almanacs (*Taschenbücher*), already noticed in an English journal,—not indeed reviewed, but at least referred to with some characteristic comments. It is pleasant that our productions of this sort meet with approval and find a market over there, since we

are also obliged to buy their similar works for good money. Little by little we shall discover, I suppose, whether the balance of this trade turns out to our advantage.

But these trivial considerations must give place to more serious ones. Left to itself every literature will exhaust its vitality, if it is not refreshed by the interest and contributions of a foreign one. What naturalist does not take pleasure in the wonderful things that he sees produced by reflection in a mirror? Now what a mirror in the field of ideas and morals means, every one has experienced in himself, and once his attention is aroused, he will understand how much of his education he owes to it.

III (1828)

The *Edinburgh Review*, as well as the current *Foreign* and *Foreign Quarterly Reviews*, we can only mention briefly here.

These journals, as they win an ever wider public, will contribute in the most effective way towards that universal world-literature for which we are hoping. Only, we repeat, the idea is not that the nations shall think alike, but that they shall learn how to understand each other, and, if they do not care to love one another, at least that they will learn to tolerate one another. Several societies now exist for the purpose of making the British Isles acquainted with the continent, and are working effectively and with a practical unanimity of opinion. We continentals can learn from them the intellectual background of the time across the channel, what they are thinking and what their judgments about things are. On the whole,

we acknowledge gladly that they go about the work with intense seriousness, with industry and tolerance and general good-will. The result for us will be that we shall be compelled to think again of our own recent literature, which we have in some measure already put to one side, and to consider and examine it anew. Especially worthy of notice is their profitable method of starting with any considerable author, and going over the whole field in which he worked.

The methods and manner of these critics deserve our consideration in many ways. Although varying on many points, yet there is an agreement in criticism upon the main issues, which seems to indicate, if not a coterie, yet a number of contemporary critics who have come to a similar attitude and point of view. Worthy of our admiration are the honest and sincere application, the careful labors, which they devote to surveying our complex artistic and literary world, and to looking over it with a just and fair attitude and vision. We shall hope often to be able to return to them and their work.

IV (1829)

MORE ABOUT A WORLD LITERATURE

The Difficulties

If a world-literature, such as is inevitable with the ever-increasing facility of communication, is to be formed in the near future, we must expect from it nothing more and nothing different from what it can and does accomplish.

The wide world, extensive as it is, is only an ex-

panded fatherland, and will, if looked at aright, be able to give us no more than what our home soil can endow us with also. What pleases the crowd spreads itself over a limitless field, and, as we already see, meets approval in all countries and regions. The serious and intellectual meets with less success, but those who are devoted to higher and more profitable things will learn to know each other more quickly and more intimately. For there are everywhere in the world such men, to whom the truth and the progress of humanity are of interest and concern. But the road which they pursue, the pace which they keep, is not to everybody's liking; the particularly aggressive wish to advance faster, and so turn aside, and prevent the furthering of that which they could promote. The serious-minded must therefore form a quiet, almost secret, company, since it would be futile to set themselves against the current of the day; rather must they manfully strive to maintain their position till the flood has past. Their principal consolation, and indeed encouragement, such men must find in the fact that truth is serviceable. If they can discover this relation, and exhibit its meaning and influence in a vital way, they will not fail to produce a powerful effect, indeed one that will extend over a range of years.

The Encouragements

Since it is often profitable to present to the reader not one's bald thought, but rather to awaken and stimulate his own thinking, it may be useful to recall the above observation which I had occasion to write down some time ago.

The question whether this or that occupation to which a man devotes himself is useful recurs often enough in the course of time, and must come before us especially at this time when it is no longer permitted to any one to live quietly according to his tastes, satisfied, moderate, and without demands upon him. The external world is so importunate and exciting that each one of us is threatened with being carried away in the whirlpool. In order to satisfy his own needs, each one sees himself compelled to attend almost instantaneously to the requirements of others; and the question naturally arises whether he has any skill or readiness to satisfy these pressing duties. There seems to be nothing left to us to say than that only the purest and strictest egoism can save us; but this must be a self-conscious resolution, thoroughly felt and calmly expressed.

Let each one ask himself for what he is best fitted, and let him cultivate this most ardently and wisely in himself and for himself; let him consider himself successively as apprentice, as journeyman, as older journeyman, and finally, but with the greatest of circumspection, as master.

If he can, with discriminating modesty, increase his demands on the external world only with the growth of his own capabilities, thus insinuating himself into the world's good graces by being useful, then he will attain his purpose step by step, and if he succeeds in reaching the highest level, will be able to influence men and things with ease.

Life, if he studies it closely, will teach him the opportunities and the hindrances which present or intrude themselves upon him; but this much the man of practical wisdom will always have before his eyes:—To tire

oneself out for the sake of the favor of to-day brings no profit for to-morrow or after.

Other Considerations

Every nation has peculiarities by which it is distinguished from the others, and it is by these distinguishing traits that nations are also attracted to and repelled from one another. The external expressions of these inner idiosyncrasies appear to the others in most cases strikingly disagreeable, or, if endurable, merely amusing. This is why, too, we always respect a nation less than it deserves. The inner traits, on the other hand, are not known or recognized, by foreigners or even by the nation itself; for the inner nature of a whole nation, as well as the individual man, works all unconsciously. At the end we wonder, we are astounded, at what appears.

These secrets I do not pretend to know, much less to have the cleverness to express them if I did. Only this much will I say,—that, so far as my insight goes, the characteristic intellectual and spiritual activity of the French is now at its height again, and for that reason will exercise soon again a great influence on the civilized world. I would gladly say more, but it leads too far; one has to be so detailed in order to be understood, and to make acceptable what one has to say.

It was not merely permissible but highly admirable that a society of Germans was formed for the special purpose of studying German poetry; since these persons, as cultured men acquainted with the other fields of German literature and politics both generally

and in detail, were well qualified to select and judge works of belles-lettres and use them as a basis for intellectual, as well as pleasurable and stimulating, conversation.

Some one may say that the best literature of a nation cannot be discovered or recognized, unless one brings home to one's mind the whole complex of its circumstances and social conditions. Something of all this can be obtained from the papers, which give us enough detailed information of public affairs. But this is not enough; we must add to it what foreigners in their critical journals and reviews are accustomed to say about themselves and about other nations, particularly the Germans,—their ideas and opinions, their interest in and reception of our productions. If one wishes, for instance, to acquaint oneself with modern French literature, one should study the lectures which have been given for the last two years and are now appearing in print,—lectures such as Guizot's *Cours d'histoire moderne*, Villemain's *Cours de littérature française*, and Cousin's *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie*. The significance they have both at home and for us comes out thus in the clearest fashion. Still more effective and interesting are perhaps the frequent numbers and volumes of *Le Globe*, *La Revue française*, and the daily, *Le Temps*. None of these can be spared, if we are to keep vividly before our eyes both sides of these great movements in France and all the subsidiary currents that spring from them.

French poetry, like French literature, is not distinct in spirit from the life and passions of the nation as a whole. In recent times it appears naturally always

as the "Opposition," and summons every genius to make the most of his talent in resisting the "powers that be," which since they are endowed with force do not need to be intellectual or spiritual.

If we follow this verse, which reveals so much, we see deep down into the soul of the nation, and from the way in which they judge us, more or less favorably, we can at the same time learn to judge ourselves. And it can do no harm to have some one make us think about ourselves.

Whoever follows the course proposed above will very quickly become completely informed of all public affairs and semi-public affairs. In our present admirably managed book-trade it is possible to obtain books speedily, instead of waiting, as has often been my experience, until the author takes occasion to send his work as a gift, so that I have often read the book long before I received it from him.

From all this it is evident that it is no light task to keep in touch with all the literature of the present day. Of the English, as well as the Italian, I shall have to speak again more particularly, for there is much more to be said.

V

(1830)

THERE has been talk for some time of a general world-literature, and indeed not without justice. For the nations, after they had been shaken into confusion and mutual conflict by the terrible wars, could not return to their settled and independent life again without noticing that they had learned many foreign ideas

and ways, which they had unconsciously adopted, and had come to feel here and there previously unrecognized spiritual and intellectual needs. Out of this arose the feeling of neighborly relations, and, instead of shutting themselves up as before, they gradually came to desire the adoption of some sort of more or less free spiritual intercourse.

This movement, it is true, has lasted only a short time, but still long enough to start considerable speculation, and to acquire from it, as one must always from any kind of foreign trade, both profit and enjoyment.

ON EPIC AND DRAMATIC POETRY[1]

(1797)

The epic and the dramatic writer are both subject to the universal poetic laws, especially the law of unity and the law of progressive development. Furthermore they both deal with similar subjects and both can use a great variety of motives. The essential difference consists in this, that an epic poet narrates an event as completely past, while the dramatist presents it as completely present. If one wished to develop in detail from the nature of man these laws which both have to follow, one would continually have to keep before his mind a rhapsodist and an actor, each in the character of a poet, the former surrounded by a circle of listeners quietly following with rapt attention, the latter by an impatient throng who have come simply to see and to hear. It would then not be difficult to deduce what is most advantageous to either of these two forms of poetry, what subjects either will choose preëminently, nor what motives either will make use of most frequently; as I remarked in the beginning, neither can lay claim to any one thing exclusively.

The subject of the epic as well as of tragedy should be based on the purely human, it should be vital, and it should make an appeal to one's feelings. The best effect is produced when the characters stand upon a certain plane of cultural advancement, so that their

[1] By Goethe and Schiller.

actions are purely the expression of their personality and are not influenced by moral, political or mechanical considerations. The myths of the heroic times were especially useful to the poets on these grounds.

The epic poem represents more especially action restricted to individuals; tragedy, suffering restricted to individuals. The epic poem represents man as an external agent, engaged in battles, journeys, in fact in every possible kind of undertaking, and so demands a certain elaborateness of treatment. Tragedy, on the other hand, represents man as an internal agent, and the action, therefore, requires but little space in a genuine tragedy.

There are five kinds of motives:

(1) Progressive, which advance the action. These the drama uses preëminently.

(2) Retrogressive, which draw the action away from its goal. These the epic poem uses almost exclusively.

(3) Retarding, which delay the progress of the action or lengthen its course. Both epic and tragic poetry use these to very great advantage.

(4) Retrospective, which introduce into the poem events which happened before the time of the poem.

(5) Prospective, which anticipate what will happen after the time of the poem. The epic as well as the dramatic poet uses the last two kinds of motives to make his poem complete.

The worlds which are to be represented are common to both, namely:—

(1) The physical world, which consists first of all of the immediate world to which the persons represented belong and which surrounds them. In it the dramatist limits himself mostly to one locality, while the epic

poet moves about with greater freedom and in a larger sphere. Secondly, the physical world, containing the more remote world in which all of nature is included. This world the epic poet, who appeals exclusively to the imagination, makes more intelligible through the use of similes and metaphors, which figures of speech are employed more sparingly by the dramatist.

(2) The moral world, which is absolutely common to both, and, whether normal or pathological, is best represented in its simplicity.

(3) The world of fancies, forebodings, apparitions, chance and fate. This is available to both, only it must of course be approximated to the world of the senses. In this world there arises a special difficulty for us moderns, because we cannot easily find substitutes for the fabulous creatures, gods, soothsayers and oracles of the ancients, however much we may desire to.

If we consider the manner of treatment as a whole, we shall find the rhapsodist, who recites what is completely past, appearing as a wise man, with calm deliberation surveying the events. It will be the purpose of his recital to get his hearers into an even frame of mind, so that they will listen to him long and willingly. He will divide the interest evenly, because it is impossible for him to counteract quickly a too vivid impression. He will, according to his pleasure, go back in point of time or anticipate what is to come. We may follow him everywhere, for he makes his appeal only to the imagination, which originates its own images and which is to a certain extent indifferent as to which images are called up. The rhapsodist as a higher being ought not to appear himself in his poem; he would read best of all behind a curtain, so that we may

separate everything personal from his work, and may believe we are hearing only the voice of the Muses.

The actor represents the very reverse of this. He presents himself as a definite individuality. It is his desire to have us take interest exclusively in him and in his immediate surroundings, so that we may feel with him the sufferings of his soul and of his body, may share his embarrassments and forget ourselves in him. To be sure he, too, will proceed by degrees, but he can risk far more vivid effects, because by his actual presence before the eyes of the audience he can neutralize a stronger impression even by a weaker one. The senses of spectators and listeners must be constantly stimulated. They must not rise to a contemplative frame of mind, but must follow eagerly; their imagination must be completely suppressed; no demands must be made upon it; and even what is narrated must be vividly brought before their vision, as it were, in terms of action.

SUPPLEMENT TO ARISTOTLE'S POETICS[1]

(1827)

Every one who has concerned himself at all about the theory of poetic art—and of tragedy in particular—will remember a passage in Aristotle which has caused the commentators much difficulty, without their ever having been able to convince themselves wholly of its meaning. In his definition of tragedy this great writer seems to demand of it that, through the representation of stirring deeds and events, which should arouse pity and fear, the soul of the spectator should be purified of these passions.

My thoughts and convictions in regard to this passage I can best impart by a translation of it:—

"Tragedy is the imitation of a significant and complete action, which has a certain extension in time and is portrayed in beautiful language by separate individuals, each of whom plays a rôle, instead of having

1 "I have just re-read the *Poetics* of Aristotle with the greatest pleasure; intelligence in its highest manifestation is a fine thing. It is really remarkable how Aristotle limits himself entirely to experience, and so appears, if perhaps somewhat material, for the most part all the more solid. It was also stimulating to me to see with what liberality he always shields the poet against the fault-finders and the hypercritical, how he always insists on essentials, and in everything else is so lax that in more than one place I was simply amazed. It is this that makes his whole view of poetry, and especially of his favorite forms, so vivifying that I shall soon take up the book again, especially in regard to some important passages which are not quite clear and the meaning of which I wish to investigate further."—Goethe to Schiller, April 28, 1797.

all represented by one person as in the narration of a story or epic. After a course of events arousing pity and fear, the action closes with the equilibration of these passions."

In the foregoing translation, I believe I have made this hitherto dubious passage clear; it will only be necessary to add the following remarks: Could Aristotle, notwithstanding his always objective manner,—as, for instance, here, where he seems to be speaking exclusively of the technique of tragedy,—be really thinking of the effect, indeed the distant effect, upon the *spectator?* By no means! He speaks clearly and definitely: When the course of action is one arousing pity and fear, the tragedy must close *on the stage* with an equilibration, a reconciliation, of these emotions.

By "catharsis," he understands this reconciling culmination, which is demanded of all drama, indeed of all poetical works.

This occurs in the tragedy through a kind of human sacrifice, whether it be rigidly worked out with the death of the victim, or, under the influence of a favoring divinity, be satisfied by a substitute, as in the case of Abraham and Agamemnon. But this reconciliation, this release, is necessary at the end if the tragedy is to be a perfect work of art. This release, on the other hand, when effected through a favorable or desirable outcome, rather makes the work resemble an intermediate species of art, as in the return of Alcestis. In comedy, on the contrary, for the clearing up of all complications, which in themselves are of little significance from the point of view of arousing fear and hope, a marriage is usually introduced; and this, even if it does not end life completely, does make in it an impor-

tant and serious break. Nobody wants to die, everybody to marry; and in this lies the half-jocose, half-serious difference between tragedy and comedy in practical æsthetics.

We shall perceive further that the Greeks did make use of their "trilogy" for such a purpose; for there is no loftier "catharsis" than the *Œdipus of Kolonus*, where a half-guilty delinquent,—a man who, through a demonic strain in his nature, through the sombre vehemence as well as greatness of his character, and through a headstrong course of action, puts himself at the mercy of the ever-inscrutable, unalterable powers,—plunges himself and his family into the deepest, irreparable misery, and yet finally, after having made atonement and reparation, is raised to the company of the gods, as the auspicious protecting spirit of a region, revered with special sacrifices and services.

Here we find the principle of the great master, that the hero of a tragedy must be regarded and represented neither as wholly guilty nor as wholly innocent. In the first case the catharsis would merely result from the nature of the story, and the murdered wretch would appear only to have escaped the common justice which would have fallen upon him anyway by law. In the second case, it is not feasible either; for then there would seem to fall on human power or fate the weight of an all too heavy burden of injustice.

But on this subject I do not wish to wax polemical, any more than on any other; I have only to point out here how up to the present time people have been inclined to put up with a dubious interpretation of this passage. Aristotle had said in the *Politics* that music could be made use of in education for ethical pur-

poses, since by means of the sacred melodies the minds of those raised to frenzy by the orgies were quieted and soothed again; thus he thought other emotions and passions could be calmed and equilibrated. That the argument here is from analogous cases we cannot deny; yet we think they are not identical. The effect of music depends on its particular character, as Handel has worked out in his "Alexander's Feast," and as we can see evidenced at every ball, where perhaps after a chaste and dignified polonaise, a waltz is played and whirls the whole company of young people away in a bacchic frenzy.

For music, like all the arts, has little power directly to influence morality, and it is always wrong to demand such results from them. Philosophy and Religion alone can accomplish this. If piety and duty must be stimulated, the arts can only casually effect this stimulation. What they can accomplish, however, is a softening of crude manners and morals; yet even this may, on the other hand, soon degenerate into effeminacy.

Whoever is on the path of a truly moral and spiritual self-cultivation, will feel and acknowledge that tragedy and tragic romance do not quiet and satisfy the mind, but rather tend to unsettle the emotions and what we call the heart, and induce a vague, unquiet mood. Youth is apt to love this mood and is for that reason passionately devoted to such productions.

We now return to our original point, and repeat: Aristotle speaks of the *technique* of tragedy, in the sense that the poet, making it the object of his attention, contrives to create something pleasing to eye and ear in a course of a completed action.

If the poet has fulfilled this purpose and his duty

on his side, tying together his knots of meaning and unraveling them again, the same process will pass before the mind of the spectator; the complications will perplex him, the solution enlighten him, but he will not go home any the better for it all. He will be inclined perhaps, if he is given to reflection, to be amazed at the state of mind in which he finds himself at home again—just as frivolous, as obstinate, as zealous, as weak, as tender or as cynical as he was when he went out. On this point we believe we have said all we can until a further working out of the whole subject makes it possible to understand it more clearly.

ON THE GERMAN THEATRE

(1815)

Now that the German stage, as one of our best national institutions, is emerging from an unfortunate narrowness and seclusion into freedom and vitality, wise directors are exerting themselves to produce an effect on a wide public, and not to confine themselves, however earnestly, to any single institution. Poets, actors, managers, and public will come to a better and better mutual understanding, but in the gratification of the moment they must not forget what their predecessors accomplished. Only upon a repertory which includes older plays can a national theatre be founded. I hope that the following words will have a favorable reception, so that the author's courage will be stimulated and he will come forward from time to time with similar suggestions.

A Plan of Schiller's, and What Came of It

When the lamented Schiller, through the influence of the court, the solicitations of society, and the inclinations of his friends, was moved to change his place of residence from Jena to Weimar, and to renounce that seclusion in which until then he had wrapt himself, he had the theatre at Weimar particularly in his mind, and he decided to devote his attention carefully and closely to the productions there.

And such a narrowing of his field the poet needed, for his extraordinary genius from his youth up had sought the heights and the depths. The power of his imagination, his poetical activity, had led him over a great range; but in spite of the ardor with which his mind traversed this broad range, with further experience it could not escape his clear insight that these qualities must necessarily lead him astray in the field of the theatre.

At Jena his friends had been witness to the perseverance and resolute determination with which he occupied himself with "Wallenstein." This subject, which kept expanding at the hands of his genius, was worked out, knit together, revised, in numerous ways, until he saw at last that it would be necessary to divide the piece into three parts, as was thereupon done. And afterwards he did not cease to make alterations, in order that the principal scenes might acquire all the effect that was possible. The result was, however, that the *Death of Wallenstein* was given oftener on all stages than the *Camp* and the *Piccolomini*.

Don Carlos had been condensed still earlier for the stage; and whoever will compare this play, as it is produced, with the earlier printed edition, will recognize the same laborious changes. For though Schiller in sketching out the plan of his work felt bound by no limitations, in a later revision for theatrical purposes he had the courage, as a result of his convictions, to adapt it stringently, yes even mercilessly, to the practical exigencies of the situation. These meant a definite limitation of time; all the principal scenes had to pass before the eyes of the audience in a certain period of time. All the other scenes he omitted, and yet he could

never really confine himself to the space of three hours.

The Robbers, Intrigue and Love, Fiesco, productions of an aggressive youthful impatience and indignation at a severe and confining training, had to undergo many alterations for the stage-production which was eagerly demanded by the public and especially the young men. About them all he would speculate whether it was not possible to assimilate them to a more refined taste, a taste such as he had trained himself since to feel. On this point he was accustomed to take long and detailed counsel with himself, in long sleepless nights, and sometimes on pleasant evenings in talks with his friends.

Could these discussions and suggestions have been preserved by a shorthand writer, we should have possessed a noteworthy contribution to productive criticism. But even more valuable will discerning readers find Schiller's own remarks about the projected and indeed commenced "Demetrius," which fine example of penetrating and critical creative ability is preserved for us in the supplement to his works. The three plays mentioned above, however, we decided not to touch, for what is offensive in them is too closely bound up with their contents and form; and we had to trust to fortune in transmitting them to posterity just as they had sprung from a powerful and bizarre genius.

Schiller, finely matured, had not attended many performances, when his active mind, considering the situation and taking a comprehensive view of things, got the idea that what had been done to his own works could be done in the case of other men's. So he drew up a plan whereby the work of earlier playwrights might be preserved for the German theatre, without prejudice

to contemporary writers,—the accepted material, the contents of the works chosen, to be adapted to a form which should be partly determined by the requirements of the stage and partly by the ideas and spirit of the present time. For these reasons he decided to devote the hours which were left him from his own work to constructing plans, in company with congenial friends, whereby plays which had a significance for our age might be revised, and a true German Theatre founded,—not only for the benefit of the reader, who would come to know famous plays from a new standpoint, but also for the benefit of the numerous theatres of Germany, which would be given the opportunity of strengthening their repertories by laying a solid foundation of older works under the ephemeral productions of the day.

In order then to found the German Theatre on true German soil, it was Schiller's intention to revise Klopstock's *Hermanns Schlacht*. The play was taken up, but the first consideration of it produced much doubt in his mind. Schiller's judgment was in general very liberal, but at the same time independent and critical. The ideal demands which Schiller according to his nature was obliged to make were not satisfied, and the piece was soon laid aside. Present-day criticism requires no hints in order to discover the grounds for the decision.

Towards Lessing's work Schiller had a singular attitude. He did not care particularly for it,—indeed, *Emilia Galotti* was repugnant to him. Yet this tragedy as well as *Minna von Barnhelm* was accepted in the repertory. He then devoted himself to *Nathan der Weise*, and in this revision, in which he was glad to have the coöperation of discerning friends, the piece

is played to this day, and it will be retained on the boards, because able actors will always be found who feel themselves equal to the rôle of Nathan. And may the German public remember always that it is called not only to witness this well-known piece, so excellently staged, but also to hear it and to understand it! May there never come a time when the divine spirit of toleration and forbearance contained in it will cease to be sacred to the nation.

The presence of the distinguished Iffland in 1796 gave occasion for the shortening of *Egmont* to the form in which it is now given here and in several places at present. That Schiller rather mutilated it in his revision is indicated by a comparison of the following scenes with the printed play itself. The public was annoyed at the omission of the Princess, for instance; yet there is in Schiller's work such a consistency that no one has dared to attempt to alter the piece for fear that other errors and misadjustments might creep into its present form.

Egmont

(*First Act*)

In an open square, cross-bow shooters. One of Egmont's men is being elevated to the post of captain, through his skill in shooting, and his health and that of the lord are being drunk; public affairs are discussed, and the characters of distinguished persons. The disposition of the people begins to show itself. Other citizens come in; unrest is revealed. A lawyer joins them, and begins to discuss the liberties of the people. Dissent and quarrels follow. Egmont enters, quiets

his men, and threatens the trouble-maker. He exhibits himself as an honored and popular prince.

(*Second Act*)

Egmont and his private secretary, through whose discourse one catches a glimpse of the liberal, independent, audacious spirit of the hero. Orange attempts to inculcate caution into his friend, and since word has come of the arrival of the Duke of Alva, tries to persuade him to flee; but all in vain.

(*Third Act*)

The citizens in fear of the impending danger; the lawyer foretells Egmont's fate; the Spanish watch enters, and the people scatter.

In a room in one of the houses we find Klaerchen thinking of her love for Egmont. She seeks to spurn the affection of her lover Brackenburg, then proceeds with mingled pleasure and dread to think of her relations with Egmont; he enters, and all is joy and happiness.

(*Fourth Act*)

The Palace. Alva's character becomes evident through his measures. Ferdinand, his natural son, who is attracted by the personality of Egmont, is ordered to take him prisoner, in order that he himself may become accustomed to tyranny. Egmont and Alva in conversation; the former frank and open, the latter reserved and at the same time tries to irritate Egmont. The latter is arrested.

Brackenburg on the street; twilight. Klaerchen wishes to incite the citizens to liberate Egmont, but they withdraw in alarm; Brackenburg, alone with Klaerchen, attempts to calm her, but in vain.

(*Fifth Act*)

Klaerchen alone in a room. Brackenburg brings the news of preparations for Egmont's execution. Klaerchen takes poison, Brackenburg rushes away, the lamp goes out, signifying that Klaerchen has passed away.

The prison, Egmont alone. The sentence of death is announced to him. Scene with Ferdinand, his young friend. Egmont, alone, falls asleep. Vision of Klaerchen in the background. He is waked by drums, and follows the watch, almost with the air of the commander himself.

Concerning the last appearance of Klaerchen, opinions are divided; Schiller was opposed to it, the author in favor of it; the public will not allow it to be omitted.

Since the present discussion does not attempt to deal with plays chronologically but with reference to other considerations, and particularly from the standpoint of author and adapter, I shall turn next to *Stella,* which also owes its appearance in the theatre to Schiller.

Since the action of the piece is unimpassioned and smooth, he left it substantially unchanged, only shortening the dialogue here and there, especially when it seemed to be passing from the dramatic to the idyllic and elegiac. For just as there may be too many incidents in a piece, so there may be too great an expres-

sion of feeling. So Schiller resisted the enticements of many charming passages and struck them relentlessly out. Well-staged, the piece was presented on January 15, 1806, for the first time, and repeated. It soon became evident that, according to our customs, which are founded strictly on monogamy, the relation of a man to two wives, especially as it appeared in this play, was not to be reconciled, and for that reason was only fit material for tragedy. For that reason the attempt of the intelligent Cecilie to harmonize the incongruities proved futile. The piece took a tragic turn, and ended in a way that satisfied the emotions and elevated the feelings. At present the piece is quite competently acted, and consequently receives the most unqualified applause. But a sweeping assurance of this kind can hardly be of practical utility to the playhouses which intend to put on the piece; and I therefore add in detail some further and necessary considerations.

The rôle of Fernando every actor, not too young, will be glad to undertake, actors, that is, who are fitted to heroic or lovers' rôles, and they will try to express with all the emotion and effect possible, the impassioned dilemma in which they are placed.

The allotment of the feminine rôles is more difficult. There are five of them,—carefully differentiated and contrasted characters. The actress who undertakes the rôle of Stella must depict to us not only her indestructible affection, her passionate love, her glowing enthusiasm, but must also make us share her feeling, and carry us along with her.

Cecilie, who at first appears weak and repressed, must soon leave this all behind her, and appear before us as a high-spirited heroine of courage and intelligence.

Lucia represents a person who in the midst of an easy and comfortable life has cultivated her talents independently, does not feel the outer pressures which force themselves upon her, but rather casts them off. Not a trace of priggishness or conceit should appear.

The postmistress is no quarrelsome old woman, but a young, cheerful, active widow, who would like to marry again only in order to be better obeyed.

Ann, if possible, should be acted by a little child. In the mouth of a child, if she speaks clearly, the decisiveness of what she has to say sounds extremely well. If the proper contrasts and shading are given to all these characters, this tragedy will not miss its effect.

The first act, which portrays external life, should be mastered with extraordinary care and thoroughness, and even the unimportant incidents ought to betray a certain artistic fitness. The sounding of the posthorn twice, for instance, produces an agreeable and even artistic effect. The steward also should not be impersonated by a mediocre but by an excellent actor, who will play the rôle of the kindly old man called to a lover's aid.

If one considers the incredible advantage which the composer has in being able to indicate in his score all his wishes and intentions by a thousand words and signs, one will pardon the dramatic poet also if he seeks to enjoin upon the directors and managers what he holds indispensable for the success of his work.

Die Laune des Verliebten was produced at the theatre in March, 1805, just when this little piece was forty years old. In it everything depends on the rôle of Egle. If a versatile actress can be found who expresses the character perfectly, then the piece is safe,

and is witnessed with pleasure. One of our most agreeable and charming actresses, who was going to Breslau, took it to the theatre there. An ingenious writer made use of the idea of the character and composed several pieces with this motive for the actress. *Stella* is also at present well received in Berlin.

Here I venture to make an observation which seems to me worth careful consideration on the part of stage-managers. If one tries to discover just why certain pieces, to which some worth is not to be denied, either are never produced or else, even when they make a good impression for a time, yet little by little disappear from the boards, one will find that the cause lies neither with the piece nor with the public, but that the necessary actors are lacking. For this reason it is advisable that pieces should not be laid entirely aside or dropped from the repertory. Rather let them be kept constantly in mind, even if there is no opportunity to give them for years. Then when the time comes that the rôles can be adequately filled again, one does not lose the chance of making an excellent impression.

Thus, for instance, the German theatre would experience a great change if a figure like the famous Seylerin should appear, with a genuine dramatic talent trained according to our modern requirements. Speedily would Medea, Semiramis, Agrippina and other heroines, which we think of as so colossal, be resurrected from the grave; other rôles besides would be transformed. Think only of such a figure as Orsina, and *Emilia Galotti* is quite another play; the Prince is exonerated as soon as one realizes that so powerful and

imperious a person is the encumbrance upon his shoulders.

We turn now to the *Mitschuldigen*. That it has a certain dramatic value may be inferred from the fact that, at a time when all German actors seemed afraid of rhythm and rhyme, it was turned into prose and produced at the theatre, where it could not maintain itself because a principal feature, the poetic rhythm and the rhyme, was lacking. But now, when the actors are more skilled in both, this attempt could be made. Some of its crudities were removed, some archaic touches modernized, and thus it continues to hold the boards still if the cast is good. It was put on at the same time as *Die Laune des Verliebten*, in March, 1805. Schiller made many suggestions for the production, but he did not live to see the *Raetsel* produced in September of the same year. This had a great success, but the author desired to remain anonymous for a long time. Afterwards, however, he published a sequel, and the two pieces help to support each other.

Let us not hesitate in the German theatre, where there appears so much variety besides, to place side by side pieces of similar motive and atmosphere, in order that we may at least give a certain breadth to the different departments of dramatic production.

Iphigenia, not without some abbreviation, was put on the Weimar stage as early as 1802; *Tasso* first in 1807 after a long and quiet preparation. Both plays continue to hold the boards, with the support of actors and actresses who are exceptionally excellent and well adapted to the rôles.

Finally we shall mention *Goetz von Berlichingen*,

which was produced for the first time in September, 1804. Although Schiller himself would not undertake this new revision, he coöperated in every possible way, and was able by his bold resolution to facilitate for the author many a point of revision; from the beginning to the final production he was most influential and effective both in word and deed. Since it is produced at few theatres, it may be worth while to relate here briefly the action of the piece, and to point out in general the principles according to which this revision was made.

Goetz von Berlichingen

(*First Act*)

By the insults which are accorded his servants by some peasants in the inn at Bamberg, we learn of the hostility between Goetz and the Bishop. Some horsemen in the service of this knight enter and relate that Weislingen, the Bishop's right-hand man, is in the neighborhood. They hurry away to notify their master.

Goetz appears in front of a hut in the woods, alert and listening. A stable-boy, George, declares himself a future hero. Brother Martin expresses envy of the soldiers, husband, and father. The servants come in with the news, Goetz hastens away, and the boy is quieted by the present of a saint's picture.

At Jaxthausen, Goetz's castle, we find his wife, sister and son. The former exhibits herself as a capable noblewoman, the latter as a tender-hearted woman, the son as rather effeminate. Faud brings word that Weislingen is captured and Goetz is bringing him in. The women go out; the two knights enter; by Goetz's

frank demeanor and the narration of old stories, Weislingen's heart is touched. Maria and Karl come in; the child invites them to sit down at table, Maria asks them to be friends. The knights give each other their hands, Maria stands between them.

(*Second Act*)

Maria and Weislingen enter. They have become lovers. Goetz and Elizabeth appear; they are all busy with hopes and plans. Weislingen is happy in his new situation. Franz, Weislingen's lad, comes from Bamberg and awakes old memories; he also draws a picture of the dangerous Adelaide of Walldorf. His passion for this lady is not to be mistaken, and we begin to fear that he will carry away his master with him.

Hans von Selbitz comes in, representing himself to the Lady Elizabeth as a merry knight-errant. Goetz gives him welcome. The news that merchants from Nuremberg are passing by to the fair is brought in; they go out. In the forest we find the merchants from Nuremberg; they are fallen upon and robbed. Through George, Goetz learns that Weislingen has left him. Goetz is inclined to work off his chagrin on the captured merchants, but he is moved to give back a jewel-box which a lover is taking to his mistress; for Goetz thinks with sadness how he must break the news to his sister of the loss of her betrothed.

(*Third Act*)

Two merchants appear in the pleasure-gardens at Augsburg. Maximilian, vexed, refuses to see them.

Weislingen encourages them, and makes use of the opportunity to influence the Emperor against Goetz and other unruly knights.

Here the relations between Weislingen and his wife Adelaide develop; she compels him unconditionally to promote her ambitions. The growing passion of Franz for her, the wanton arts used to seduce him, become apparent.

We now return to Jaxthausen. Sickingen woos Maria. Selbitz brings the news that Goetz is declared an outlaw. They seize weapons. Lerse is announced; Goetz receives him joyfully.

We are now on a mountain; wide view, ruined tower, castle and rocks. A gipsy family is here seeking protection from the dangers of the military campaign and the unrest of the country. They serve to give coherence to the following scenes. The captain of the Imperial troops enters, gives his orders, makes himself comfortable. The gipsies cajole him. George comes suddenly upon the summit; Selbitz is brought in wounded, having been attacked by servants of the Emperor, and rescued by Lerse. He is visited by Goetz.

(*Fourth Act*)

Jaxthausen. Maria and Sickingen, with them the victorious Goetz. He is afraid that he will be surrounded. Maria and Sickingen are married; Goetz persuades them to leave the castle. Summons, a siege, brave resistance, the family table once more; Lerse brings news of a capitulation; treachery.

Weislingen's and Adelaide's dwelling in Augsburg. Night. Adelaide's masked ball. It is noticeable that

the Archduke is her centre of interest at this occasion; but she is able to silence the jealous Franz and use him for her purposes.

Tavern at Heilbronn. The Town Hall there. Goetz's daring and boldness. Sickingen releases him. The familiar scenes are left in.

(*Fifth Act*)

A wood. Goetz and George lying in wait for a wild animal. It is painfully evident out here that Goetz cannot cross his boundaries. We realize the mischief of the peasant war. The monster advances; Max Stumpf, whom they have dragged along with them as a guide and leader, decides to leave them and the position. Goetz, half persuaded, half compelled, yields, announces himself as their captain for four weeks and breaks his ban. The peasants are divided in spirit, and the devil is loose.

Weislingen appears at the head of knights and soldiers against the rebels, in order especially to capture Goetz, and thus free himself from the hateful feeling of inferiority. Relations with his wife are very strained; Franz's overwhelming passion becomes more and more evident. Goetz and George in the painful situation of being associated and implicated with rebels.

A secret judgment is issued against him. Goetz flees to the gipsies and is captured by the Imperial troops.

Adelaide's palace. The adventuress parts with the happy youth, after she has prevailed upon him to bring poison to her husband. An apparition appears; a powerful scene follows.

From these dismal surroundings, we pass to a bright spring garden. Maria is sleeping in a bower of flowers. Lerse comes to her, and rouses her to beg Weislingen for her brother's life.

Weislingen's palace. The dying man, with Maria and Franz. Goetz's sentence to death is revoked, and we leave the dying hero in the prison garden.

The principles of the earlier revisions were again applied in this case. The number of scene-changes was lessened, securing more opportunity for the development of the characters, the action was condensed, and, though with many sacrifices, the play finally approximated genuine dramatic form. Why it has not in this form spread more widely on the German stage will be eventually understood, I presume, since critics are not disinclined to give accounts of the reception on the stage of the plays of the various German authors, the treatment they receive and the length of time their pieces last.

If these remarks are favorably received, we shall probably discuss next the introduction of foreign plays, such as has already taken place at the Weimar Theatre. This includes Greek and French, English, Italian and Spanish plays, besides the comedies of Terence and Plautus, in which masks are made use of.

Most necessary would it be perhaps to discuss Shakespeare and combat the prejudice that the works of this extraordinary writer should be given in the German Theatre in their complete length and breadth. This false idea has meant the suppression of the older revisions of Schroeder, and prevented others from prospering.

It must be emphatically insisted, and with solid reason, that in this case as in so many others the reader must be distinguished from and part company with the spectator; each has his rights, and neither should be permitted to injure the other's.

LUDWIG TIECK'S DRAMATURGIC FRAGMENTS

(1826)

My mind has been stimulated in many ways by this noteworthy book.

As a dramatic poet, as a writer who by extensive travels and by personal observation and study of foreign theatres has qualified himself as a critic of insight and knowledge in connection with our native theatre, and as one who by scholarly study has fitted himself to be a historian of past and present times, the author has an assured position with the German public, which is here especially evident and notable. In him, criticism rests upon pleasure, pleasure upon knowledge, and these criteria, which are usually thought of as distinct, are here fused into a satisfying whole.

His reverence for Kleist is highly praiseworthy. As far as I am personally concerned, in spite of the sincerest desire to appreciate him justly, Kleist always arouses in me horror and aversion, as of a body intended by nature to be beautiful, but seized by an incurable illness. Tieck is the very reverse; he dwells rather upon the good that has been left by nature; the deformity he puts aside, excusing much more than he blames. For, after all, this man of genius deserves only our pity; on this point we do reach agreement.

I also agree with him willingly when, as champion for the unity, indivisibility and inviolability of Shake-

speare's plays, he wants to have them put on the stage without revision or modification from beginning to end.

When ten years ago I was of the contrary opinion, and made more than one attempt to select only the particularly effective parts of Shakespeare's plays, rejecting the disturbing and the diffuse, I was quite right, as director of the theatre, in doing so. For I had had experience in tormenting myself and the actors for the space of a month, and of finally putting on a production which indeed entertained and aroused admiration, but which on account of conditions hardly possible to fulfil more than once, could not maintain its place in the repertory. Still I am perfectly willing that such attempts should here and there be made, for, on the whole, failure does no harm.

Since men are not to get rid of longing and aspiration, it is salutary for them to direct their unsatisfied idealism towards some definite object, to work, for instance, towards depicting a mighty though vanished past seriously and worthily in the present. Now actors as well as poets and readers have the opportunity to study and see Shakespeare, and, through their endeavors to attain the unattainable, disclose the true inner capabilities and potentialities of their own nature.

Though in these respects I completely approve of the valuable efforts of my old co-worker, I must confess that I differ from him in some of his utterances; as, for instance, that "Lady Macbeth is a tender, loving soul, and as such should be played." I do not consider such remarks to be really the author's opinion, but rather paradoxes, which in view of the weighty authority of our author can only work great harm.

It is in the nature of the case, and Tieck himself

has presented significant illustrations of the fact, that an actor who does not feel himself to be quite in agreement with the conventional portrayal, may in clever fashion modify and adjust it to himself and his own nature, and fit the new interpretation so well as to provide, as it were, a new and brilliant creation, and indemnify us for the clever fiction with unexpected and delightful new grounds of comparison and contrast.

This we must admit as valid; but we cannot approve the case where the theorist makes certain intimations to the actor, whereby the latter is led astray to portray the rôle in a new manner and style against the obvious intention of the poet.

From many viewpoints such an undertaking is questionable. The public is looking for authority always; and it is right. For do we not act similarly in taking counsel in joy and sorrow with those who are well versed in the wisdom of art and of life? Whoever then has acquired any legitimate authority in any field should strive, by continual assiduity in holding close to the line of the true and the right, to preserve that authority in inviolable sanctity.

An important paper is Tieck's explanation of the *Piccolomini* and the *Wallenstein*. I saw these plays develop from beginning to end, and I am filled with admiration at the degree of penetration which he shows in treating a work which, although one of the most excellent not only on the German stage but on all stages, yet in itself is unequal, and for that reason often fails to satisfy the critic, although the crowd, which does not take the separate parts with such strictness, is necessarily charmed with it as a whole.

Most of the places where Tieck finds something to

criticize, I find reason to consider as pathological. If Schiller had not been suffering from a long wasting disease, which finally killed him, the whole thing would have been different. Our correspondence, which relates in the clearest way the circumstances under which *Wallenstein* was written, will stimulate thoughtful people to much profitable reflection, and persuade them to think ever more seriously how closely our æsthetics is connected with physiology, pathology, and physics: in this way they may realize the light which these sciences throw upon the conditions to which individuals as well as whole nations, the most extensive world-epochs as well as daily affairs, are subjected.

ON DIDACTIC POETRY

(1827)

Didactic poetry is not a distinct poetic style or genre in the same sense as the lyric, epic, and dramatic. Every one will understand this who recognizes that the latter differ in form, and therefore didactic poetry, which derives its name from its content, cannot be put in the same category.

All poetry should be instructive, but unobviously so. It should draw the attention of a reader to the idea which is of value to be imparted; but he himself must draw the lesson out of it, as he does out of life.

Didactic or schoolmasterly poetry is a hybrid between poetry and rhetoric. For that reason, as it approximates now one and now the other, it is able to possess more or less of poetic value. But, like descriptive and satirical poetry, it is always a secondary and subordinate species, which in a true æsthetic is always placed between the art of poetry and the art of speech. The intrinsic worth of didactic poetry, that is to say, of an edifying art-work, written with charm and vigor, and graced with rhythm and melody and the ornament of imaginative power, is for that reason in no way lessened. From the rhymed chronicles, from the verse-maxims of the old pedagogues, down to the best of this class, all have their value, considered in their place and taken at their proper worth.

If one examines the matter closely and without prejudice, it strikes one that didactic poetry is valuable for the sake of its popular appeal. Even the most talented poet should feel himself honored to have treated in this style a chapter of useful knowledge. The English have some highly praiseworthy examples of this style. With jest and seriousness they curry favor with the crowd, and then discuss in explanatory notes whatever the reader must know in order to understand the poem. The teacher in the field of æsthetics, ethics, or history has a fine chance to systematize and clarify this chapter and acquaint his students with the merit of the best works of this kind, not according to the utility of their contents, but with reference to the greater or less degree of their poetical value.

This subject should properly be quite omitted from a course on æsthetics, but for the sake of those who have studied poetry and rhetoric, it might be presented in special lectures, perhaps public. Here a true comprehension, as everywhere, will prove of great advantage to practice; for many people will grasp the difficulty of weaving together a piece out of knowledge and imagination, of binding two opposed elements together into a living bodily whole. The lecturer should reveal the means by which this reconciliation can be made, and his auditors, thereby guarded against mistakes, might each attempt in his own way to produce a similar effect.

Among the many ways and means of effecting such a fusion, good humor is the most certain, and could also be considered the most suitable, were pure humor not so rare.

No more singular undertaking could easily be thought of than to turn the geology of a district into a didactic,

and indeed highly imaginative, poem; yet this is what a member of the Geological Society of London has done, in an attempt to popularize in this way a subject, and promote a study usually insufferable to the thought of travelers.

SUPERSTITION AND POETRY

(1823)

Superstition is the poetry of life; both build an imaginary world, and between the things of the actual, palpable world they anticipate the most marvelous connections. Sympathy and antipathy govern everywhere.

Poetry is ever freeing itself from such fetters as it arbitrarily imposes upon itself; superstition, on the contrary, can be compared to the magic cords which draw together ever the tighter, the more one struggles against them. The time of greatest enlightenment is not secure from it; let it strike an uncultured century or epoch, and the clouded mind of poor humanity begins to strive after the impossible, to endeavor to have intercourse with and influence the supernatural, the far-distant, the future. A numerous world of marvels it constructs for itself, surrounded with a circle of darkness and gloom. Such clouds hang over whole centuries, and grow thicker and thicker. The imagination broods over a waste of sensuality; reason seems to have turned back like Astræa to its divine origin; wisdom is in despair, since she has no means of successfully asserting her rights. Superstition does not harm the poet, for he knows how to make its half-truths, to which he gives only a literary validity, count in manifold ways for good.

THE METHODS OF FRENCH CRITICISM

I (1817)

A WEALTH of terms for unfavorable criticism:—

A. abandonnée, absurde, arrogance, astuce.
B. bafoué, bête, bêtise, bouffissure, bouquin, bourgeois, boursouflure, boutade, brisé, brutalité.
C. cabale, cagot, canaille, carcan, clique, contraire, créature.
D. déclamatoire, décrié, dégoût, dénigrement, dépourvu, dépravé, désobligeant, détestable, diabolique, dur.
E. échoppe, enflure, engouement, ennui, ennuyeux, énorme, entortillé, éphémères, épluché, espèce, étourneau.
F. factice, fadaise, faible, fainéant, fané, fastidieux, fatigant, fatuité, faux, forcé, fou, fourré, friperie, frivole, furieux.
G. gâte, gauchement, gaucher, grimace, grossier, grossièrement.
H. haillons, honnêtement, honte, horreur.
I. imbécile, impertinence, impertinent, impuissant, incorrection, indécis, indéterminé, indifférence, indignités, inégalité, inguérissable, insipide, insipidité, insoutenable, intolérant, jouets, irréfléchi.
L. laquais, léger, lésine, louche, lourd.
M. maladresse, manque, maroud, mauvais, médiocre, mépris, méprise, mignardise, mordant.

N. négligé, négligence, noirceur, non-soin.
O. odieux.
P. passable, pauvreté, pénible, petites-maisons, peu-propre, pie-grièche, pitoyable, plat, platitude, pompeux, précieux, puérilités.
R. rapsodie, ratatiné, rebattu, réchauffé, redondance, rétréci, révoltant, ridicule, roquet.
S. sans succès, sifflets, singerie, somnifère, soporifique, sottise, subalterne.
T. terrassé, tombée, traînée, travers, triste.
V. vague, vexé, vide, vieillerie, volumineux.

A scanty store for praise:—

A. animé, applaudie.
B. brillant.
C. charmant, correct.
E. esprit.
F. facile, finesse.
G. goût, grâce, gracieux, grave.
I. invention, justesse.
L. léger, légèreté, libre.
N. nombreux.
P. piquant, prodigieux, pur.
R. raisonnable.
S. spirituel.
V. verve.

"Words are the image of the soul; yet not an image, but rather a shadow! Expressing roughly, and signifying gently, all that we have, all that we have had in our experience! What was,—where has it gone? and what is that which is with us now? Ah! we speak!

Swiftly we catch and seize the gifts of life as they fleet by us."

The insight and character of a man express themselves most clearly in his judgments. In what he rejects, and what he accepts, he confesses to what is alien to him and what he has need of; and so each year designates unconsciously its present spiritual state, the compass of its past life.

Thus is it also with nations; their praise and censure must always be strictly consonant to their situation. We possessed Greek and Roman terminology of this sort; the foregoing would give an occasion for examining recent criticism. Like the individual man, the nation rests on traditional ideas, foreign more often than native, both inherited and original. But only in so far as a people has a native literature can it judge and understand the past as it does the present. The Englishman clings earnestly and stubbornly to classic antiquity, and will not be convinced that the Orient has produced poets, unless he can be shown parallel passages from Horace. What advantages, on the other hand, Shakespeare's independent genius has brought to the nation can hardly be expressed.

The French by the introduction of badly understood classical principles and an over-nice sense of form so constrained their poetry that it must finally quite disappear, since it could not become more similar to prose. The German was on the right road and will find it again, as soon as he gives up the unhappy attempt to rank the *Nibelungen* with the *Iliad*.

The favorable opinion which an excellent foreign writer has concerning us Germans may be appropriately

related here. The Privy Councilor of the Russian Empire, Count Uvaroff, speaks thus in our honor, in a preface addressed to an old friend and partner, and contained in his valuable work on *Nonnus of Panopolis, the Poet* (St. Petersburg, 1817): "The renaissance of archæology belongs to the Germans. Other peoples may have contributed preparatory work, but if the more advanced philological studies are ever developed to a complete whole, such a palingenesis or regeneration could only take place in Germany. For this reason, certain new views can hardly be expressed in any other language, and on that account I have written in German. I hope we have now given up the perverse notion of the political preëminence of this or that language. It is time that every one, unconcerned about the instrument itself, should select the language which fits most closely the circle of ideas in which his thought is moving."

Here speaks an able, talented, intellectual man, whose mind is above the petty limitations of a cold literary patriotism, and who, like a master of musical art, draws the stops of his well-equipped organ which express the thought and feeling of each moment. Would that all cultivated Germans would take thankfully to heart these excellent and instructive words of his, and that intellectual youths would be inspired to make themselves proficient in several languages, as optional instruments of life!

II (1820)

In my article on "Urteilsworte französischer Kritiker," a large number of unfavorable epithets used by French critics were set off against a scanty number of

favorable words. In connection with this, the *Vrai Liberal* of February 4, 1819, lodges a complaint against me and accuses me of an injustice towards the French nation. It does this with so much civility and charm as to make me ashamed of myself, were it not for the fact that behind my presentation of those words there lay a secret, which I hasten to reveal to it and to my readers at this time.

I admit without hesitation that the Brussels correspondent of the *Vrai Liberal* is quite right when he points out how among the words of censure which I gave there appear many peculiar ones which one would not exactly expect; and in addition, that in the list of favorable words, several are lacking which ought to occur to every one. In order to explain this, and make the story clearer, I shall relate how I was induced to make this particular list.

When Herr von Grimm forty years ago achieved an honorable entrance into Parisian society, at that time extraordinarily talented and intellectual, and was recognized practically as a member of this distinguished company, he decided to send a written bulletin of literary and other interesting matters to princely personages and wealthy people in Germany, in order to entertain them, for a considerable remuneration, with the characteristic life of Paris circles, in regard to which they were curious in the outside world, because they could well consider Paris as the centre of the cultured world. These letters were to contain not merely news; but the best works of Diderot, *The Nun*, *Jacques the Fatalist*, etc., were by degrees inserted in such small portions that curiosity, attention, and eagerness were kept alive from number to number.

Through the favor of distinguished patrons I was permitted to peruse these bulletins regularly, and I did not neglect to study them with great deliberation and ardor. Now, if I may be permitted to say it to my credit, I always cheerfully recognized the superiority of the writers and their works, treasured and admired them, and also thankfully profited by them. For this reason I was soon struck in this correspondence of Grimm's with the fact that in the stories, anecdotes, delineation of character, description, criticism, one noticed more of censure than of praise, more derogatory than laudatory terminology. One day in good humor, for my own consideration and edification, I began to take down the complete expressions, and later, half in jest and half in earnest, to split them up and arrange them alphabetically; and thus they remained on my desk for many years.

When finally the correspondence of Grimm was published, I read it as the document of a past age, but with care, and soon came upon many an expression which I had noticed before; and I was convinced anew that the censure by far exceeded the praise. Then I hunted up the earlier work of mine and had it printed, for the sake of intellectual edification, which did not fail me. At the moment I was not able to give further attention to the matter; and it is therefore not unlikely that in so voluminous a work many a word of praise and blame that has escaped me may be found.

But in order that this reproach, which appeared to concern a whole nation, may not be left clinging to a single author, I shall reserve the privilege of discussing this important literary topic on more general lines in the near future.

ON CRITICISM

(1821-24)

I

Criticism is either destructive or constructive. The former is very easy; for one need only set up some imaginary standard, some model or other, however foolish this may be, and then boldly assert that the work of art under consideration does not measure up to that standard, and therefore is of no value. That settles the matter, and one can without any more ado declare that the poet has not come up to one's requirements. In this way the critic frees himself of all obligations of gratitude toward the artist.

Constructive criticism is much harder. It asks: What did the author set out to do? Was his plan reasonable and sensible, and how far did he succeed in carrying it out? If these questions are answered with discernment and sympathy, we may be of real assistance to the author in his later works, for even in his first attempts he has undoubtedly taken certain preliminary steps which approach the level of our criticism.

Perhaps we should call attention to another point which is altogether too frequently overlooked, namely, that the critic must judge a work of art more for the sake of the author than of the public. Every day we see how, without the least regard for the opinions of

reviewers, some drama or novel is received by men and women in the most divers individual ways, is praised, found fault with, given or refused a place in the heart, merely as it happens to appeal to the personal idiosyncrasy of each reader.

II

Criticism is a practice of the Moderns. What does this mean? Just this: If you read a book and let it work upon you, and yield yourself up entirely to its influence, then, and only then, will you arrive at a correct judgment of it.

III

Some of my admiring readers have told me for a long time that instead of expressing a judgment on books, I describe the influence which they have had on me. And at bottom this is the way all readers criticize, even if they do not communicate an opinion or formulate ideas about it to the public. The scholar finds nothing new in a book, and therefore cannot praise it, while the young student, eager for knowledge, finds that knowledge increased, and a stimulus given to his culture. The one is stirred, while the other remains cold. This explains why the reception of books is so varied.

IV

I am more and more convinced that whenever one has to express an opinion on the actions or on the writings of others, unless this be done from a certain one-sided enthusiasm, or from a loving interest in the

person and the work, the result is hardly worth considering. Sympathy and enjoyment in what we see are in fact the only reality; and from such reality, reality as a natural product follows. All else is vanity.

ON SHAKESPEARE

WILHELM MEISTER'S CRITIQUE OF *HAMLET*

(1795)

WILHELM had scarcely read one or two of Shakespeare's plays, till their effect on him became so strong that he could go no farther. His whole soul was in commotion. He sought an opportunity to speak with Jarno; to whom, on meeting with him, he expressed his boundless gratitude for such delicious entertainment.

"I clearly enough foresaw," said Jarno, "that you would not remain insensible to the charms of the most extraordinary and most admirable of all writers."

"Yes," exclaimed our friend, "I cannot recollect that any book, any man, any incident of my life, has produced such important effects on me, as the precious works to which by your kindness I have been directed. They seem as if they were performances of some celestial genius, descending among men, to make them, by the mildest instructions, acquainted with themselves. They are no fictions! You would think, while reading them, you stood before the unclosed awful Books of Fate, while the whirlwind of most impassioned life was howling through the leaves, and tossing them fiercely to and fro. The strength and tenderness, the power and peacefulness, of this man, have so astonished and transported me, that I long vehemently for the time when I shall have it in my power to read farther."

"Bravo!" said Jarno, holding out his hand, and squeezing our friend's. "This is as it should be! And the consequences, which I hope for, will likewise surely follow."

"I wish," said Wilhelm, "I could but disclose to you all that is going on within me even now. All the anticipations I ever had regarding man and his destiny, which have accompanied me from youth upwards, often unobserved by myself, I find developed and fulfilled in Shakespeare's writings. It seems as if he cleared up every one of our enigmas to us, though we cannot say, Here or there is the word of solution. His men appear like natural men, and yet they are not. These, the most mysterious and complex productions of creation, here act before us as if they were watches, whose dial plates and cases were of crystal, which pointed out, according to their use, the course of the hours and minutes; while, at the same time, you could discern the combination of wheels and springs that turned them. The few glances I have cast over Shakespeare's world incite me, more than anything beside, to quicken my footsteps forward into the actual world, to mingle in the flood of destinies that is suspended over it, and at length, if I shall prosper, to draw a few cups from the great ocean of true nature, and to distribute them from off the stage among the thirsting people of my native land." . . .

Seeing the company so favorably disposed, Wilhelm now hoped he might further have it in his power to converse with them on the poetic merit of the plays which might come before them. "It is not enough," said he next day, when they were all again assembled,

"for the actor merely to glance over a dramatic work, to judge of it by his first impression, and thus, without investigation, to declare his satisfaction or dissatisfaction with it. Such things may be allowed in a spectator, whose purpose it is rather to be entertained and moved than formally to criticize. But the actor, on the other hand, should be prepared to give a reason for his praise or censure; and how shall he do this, if he have not taught himself to penetrate the sense, the views, the feelings of his author? A common error is to form a judgment of a drama from a single part in it, and to look upon this part itself in an isolated point of view, not in its connection with the whole. I have noticed this within a few days so clearly in my own conduct that I will give you the account as an example, if you please to hear me patiently.

"You all know Shakespeare's incomparable *Hamlet;* our public reading of it at the castle yielded every one of us the greatest satisfaction. On that occasion we proposed to act the play; and I, not knowing what I undertook, engaged to play the prince's part. This I conceived that I was studying, while I began to get by heart the strongest passages, the soliloquies, and those scenes in which force of soul, vehemence and elevation of feeling have the freest scope, where the agitated heart is allowed to display itself with touching expressiveness.

"I further conceived that I was penetrating quite into the spirit of the character, while I endeavored, as it were, to take upon myself the load of deep melancholy under which my prototype was laboring, and in this humor to pursue him through the strange laby-

rinths of his caprices and his singularities. Thus learning, thus practising, I doubted not but I should by and bye become one person with my hero.

"But the farther I advanced, the more difficult did it become for me to form any image of the whole, in its general bearings; till at last it seemed as if impossible. I next went through the entire piece, without interruption; but here, too, I found much that I could not away with. At one time the characters, at another time the manner of displaying them, seemed inconsistent; and I almost despaired of finding any general tint, in which I might present my whole part with all its shadings and variations. In such devious paths I toiled, and wandered long in vain; till at length a hope arose that I might reach my aim in quite a new way.

"I set about investigating every trace of Hamlet's character, as it had shown itself before his father's death; I endeavored to distinguish what in it was independent of this mournful event, independent of the terrible events that followed; and what most probably the young man would have been had no such thing occurred.

"Soft, and from a noble stem, this royal flower had sprung up under the immediate influences of majesty: the idea of moral rectitude with that of princely elevation, the feeling of the good and dignified with the consciousness of high birth, had in him been unfolded simultaneously. He was a prince, by birth a prince; and he wished to reign, only that good men might be good without obstruction. Pleasing in form, polished by nature, courteous from the heart, he was meant to be the pattern of youth and the joy of the world.

"Without any prominent passion, his love for Ophelia was a still presentiment of sweet wants. His zeal in knightly accomplishments was not entirely his own: it needed to be quickened and inflamed by praise bestowed on others for excelling in them. Pure in sentiment, he knew the honorable-minded, and could prize the rest which an upright spirit tastes on the bosom of a friend. To a certain degree he had learned to discern and value the good and the beautiful in arts and sciences; the mean, the vulgar, was offensive to him; and, if hatred could take root in his tender soul, it was only so far as to make him properly despise the false and changeful insects of a court, and play with them in easy scorn. He was calm in his temper, artless in his conduct, neither pleased with idleness, nor too violently eager for employment. The routine of a university he seemed to continue when at court. He possessed more mirth of humor than of heart: he was a good companion, pliant, courteous, discreet, and able to forget and forgive an injury, yet never able to unite himself with those who overstepped the limits of the right, the good, and the becoming.

"When we read the piece again, you shall judge whether I am yet on the proper track. I hope at least to bring forward passages that shall support my opinion in its main points."

This delineation was received with warm approval; the company imagined they foresaw that Hamlet's manner of proceeding might now be very satisfactorily explained; they applauded this method of penetrating into the spirit of a writer. Each of them proposed to himself to take up some piece, and study it on these principles, and so unfold the author's meaning. . . .

Loving Shakespeare as our friend did, he failed not to lead round the conversation to the merits of that dramatist. Expressing, as he entertained, the liveliest hopes of the new epoch which these exquisite productions must form in Germany, he erelong introduced his *Hamlet*, which play had busied him so much of late.

Serlo declared that he would long ago have represented the play had it at all been possible, and that he himself would willingly engage to act Polonius. He added, with a smile, "An Ophelia, too, will certainly turn up, if we had but a Prince."

Wilhelm did not notice that Aurelia seemed a little hurt at her brother's sarcasm. Our friend was in his proper vein, becoming copious and didactic, expounding how he would have *Hamlet* played. He circumstantially delivered to his hearers the opinions we before saw him busied with; taking all the trouble possible to make his notion of the matter acceptable, skeptical as Serlo showed himself regarding it. "Well, then," said the latter finally, "suppose we grant you all this, what will you explain by it?"

"Much, everything," said Wilhelm. "Conceive a prince such as I have painted him, and that his father suddenly dies. Ambition and the love of rule are not the passions that inspire him. As a king's son, he would have been contented; but now he is first constrained to consider the difference which separates a sovereign from a subject. The crown was not hereditary; yet his father's longer possession of it would have strengthened the pretensions of an only son, and secured his hopes of succession. In place of this, he now beholds himself excluded by his uncle, in spite of specious promises, most probably forever. He is

now poor in goods and favor, and a stranger in the scene which from youth he had looked upon as his inheritance. His temper here assumes its first mournful tinge. He feels that now he is not more, that he is less than a private nobleman; he offers himself as the servant of every one; he is not courteous and condescending, he is needy and degraded.

"His past condition he remembers as a vanished dream. It is in vain that his uncle strives to cheer him, to present his situation in another point of view. The feeling of his nothingness will not leave him.

"The second stroke that came upon him wounded deeper, bowed still more. It was the marriage of his mother. The faithful, tender son had yet a mother, when his father passed away. He hoped in the company of his surviving noble-minded parent, to reverence the heroic form of the departed: but his mother, too, he loses; and it is something worse than death that robs him of her. The trustful image, which a good child loves to form of its parents, is gone. With the dead there is no help, on the living no hold. Moreover, she is a woman; and her name is Frailty, like that of all her sex.

"Now only does he feel completely bowed down, now only orphaned; and no happiness of life can repay what he has lost. Not reflective or sorrowful by nature, reflection and sorrow have become for him a heavy obligation. It is thus that we see him first enter on the scene. I do not think that I have mixed aught foreign with the play, or overcharged a single feature of it."

Serlo looked at his sister, and said: "Did I give thee a false picture of our friend? He begins well: he has

still many things to tell us, many to persuade us of." Wilhelm asseverated loudly that he meant not to persuade, but to convince; he begged for another moment's patience.

"Figure to yourselves this youth," cried he, "this son of princes; conceive him vividly, bring his state before your eyes and then observe him when he learns that his father's spirit walks; stand by him in the terrors of the night, when even the venerable ghost appears before him. He is seized with boundless horror; he speaks to the mysterious form; he sees it beckon him; he follows and hears. The fearful accusation of his uncle rings in his ears, the summons to revenge, and the piercing, oft-repeated prayer, Remember me!

"And, when the ghost has vanished, who is it that stands before us? A young hero panting for vengeance? A prince by birth, rejoicing to be called to punish the usurper of his crown? No! trouble and astonishment take hold of the solitary young man: he grows bitter against smiling villains, swears that he will not forget the spirit, and concludes with the significant ejaculation,—

> "'The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right!'

"In these words, I imagine, will be found the key to Hamlet's whole procedure. To me it is clear that Shakespeare meant, in the present case, to represent the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it. In this view the whole play seems to me to be composed. There is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar, which should have borne only pleasant flowers in its bosom: the roots expand, the jar is shivered.

"A lovely, pure, noble, and most moral nature, without the strength of nerve which forms a hero, sinks beneath a burden it cannot bear and must not cast away. All duties are holy for him: the present is too hard. Impossibilities have been required of him,—not in themselves impossibilities, but such for him. He winds and turns, and torments himself; he advances and recoils; is ever put in mind, ever puts himself in mind, at last does all but lose his purpose from his thoughts, yet still without recovering his peace of mind."

Several people entering interrupted the discussion. They were musical dilettanti, who commonly assembled at Serlo's once a week, and formed a little concert. Serlo himself loved music much: he used to maintain that a player without taste for it never could attain a distinct conception and feeling of the scenic art. "As a man performs," he would observe, "with far more ease and dignity when his gestures are accompanied and guided by a tune; so the player ought, in idea as it were, to set to music even his prose parts, that he may not monotonously slight them over in his individual style, but treat them in suitable alternation by time and measure."

Aurelia seemed to give but little heed to what was passing: at last she conducted Wilhelm to another room; and going to the window, and looking out at the starry sky, she said to him, "You have more to tell us about Hamlet: I will not hurry you,—my brother must hear it as well as I; but let me beg to know your thoughts about Ophelia."

"Of her there cannot much be said," he answered; "for a few master-strokes complete her character. The whole being of Ophelia floats in sweet and ripe sensa-

tion. Kindness for the prince, to whose hand she may aspire, flows so spontaneously, her tender heart obeys its impulses so unresistingly, that both father and brother are afraid: both give her warning harshly and directly. Decorum, like the thin lawn upon her bosom, cannot hide the soft, still movements of her heart: it, on the contrary, betrays them. Her fancy is smit; her silent modesty breathes amiable desire; and if the friendly goddess Opportunity should shake the tree, its fruit would fall."

"And then," said Aurelia, "when she beholds herself forsaken, cast away, despised; when all is inverted in the soul of her crazed lover, and the highest changes to the lowest, and, instead of the sweet cup of love, he offers her the bitter cup of woe—"

"Her heart breaks," cried Wilhelm; "the whole structure of her being is loosened from its joinings: her father's death strikes fiercely against it, and the fair edifice altogether crumbles into fragments."

Serlo, this moment entering, inquired about his sister, and, looking in the book which our friend had hold of, cried, "So you are again at *Hamlet?* Very good! Many doubts have arisen in me, which seem not a little to impair the canonical aspect of the play as you would have it viewed. The English themselves have admitted that its chief interest concludes with the third act; the last two lagging sorrily on, and scarcely uniting with the rest: and certainly about the end it seems to stand stock-still."

"It is very possible," said Wilhelm, "that some individuals of a nation, which has so many masterpieces to feel proud of, may be led by prejudice and narrowness of mind to form false judgments; but this

cannot hinder us from looking with our own eyes, and doing justice where we see it due. I am very far from censuring the plan of *Hamlet:* on the other hand, I believe there never was a grander one invented; nay, it is not invented, it is real."

"How do you demonstrate that?" inquired Serlo.

"I will not demonstrate anything," said Wilhelm; "I will merely show you what my own conceptions of it are."

Aurelia raised herself from her cushion, leaned upon her hand, and looked at Wilhelm, who, with the firmest assurance that he was in the right, went on as follows: "It pleases us, it flatters us, to see a hero acting on his own strength, loving and hating at the bidding of his heart, undertaking and completing casting every obstacle aside, and attaining some great end. ~~Poet~~s and historians would willingly persuade us that so proud a lot may fall to man. In *Hamlet* we are taught another lesson; the hero is without a plan, but the play is full of plan. Here we have no villain punished on some self-conceived and rigidly accomplished scheme of vengeance. A horrid deed is done; it rolls along with all its consequences, dragging with it even the guiltless: the guilty perpetrator would, as it seems, evade the abyss made ready for him; yet he plunges in, at the very point by which he thinks he shall escape and happily complete his course.

"For it is the property of crime to extend its mischief over innocence, as it is of virtue to extend its blessings over many that deserve them not; while frequently the author of the one or the other is not punished or rewarded at all. Here in this play of ours, how strange! The Pit of darkness sends its spirit and

demands revenge: in vain! All circumstances tend one way, and hurry to revenge: in vain! Neither earthly nor infernal thing may bring about what is reserved for Fate alone. The hour of judgment comes; the wicked falls with the good; one race is mowed away, that another may spring up."

After a pause, in which they looked at one another, Serlo said, "You pay no great compliment to Providence, in thus exalting Shakespeare; and besides, it appears to me, that for the honor of your poet, as others for the honor of Providence, you ascribe to him an object and a plan such as he himself has never thought of."

"Let me also put a question," said Aurelia. "I have looked at Ophelia's part again: I am contented with it, and confident that, under certain circumstances, I could play it. But tell me, should not the poet have furnished the insane maiden with another sort of songs? Could not some fragments out of melancholy ballads be selected for this purpose? Why put double meanings and lascivious insipidities in the mouth of this noble-minded girl?"

"Dear friend," said Wilhelm, "even here I cannot yield you one iota. In these singularities, in this apparent impropriety, a deep sense is hid. Do we not understand from the very first what the mind of the good, soft-hearted girl was busied with? Silently she lived within herself, yet she scarce concealed her wishes, her longing: and how often may she have attempted, like an unskilful nurse, to lull her senses to repose with songs which only kept them more awake? But at last, when her self-command is altogether gone, when the secrets of her heart are hovering on her tongue,

that tongue betrays her; and in the innocence of insanity she solaces herself, unmindful of king or queen, with the echo of her loose and well-beloved songs,—'Tomorrow is Saint Valentine's Day,' and 'By Gis and by Saint Charity.' . . ."

"I must admit your picture of Ophelia to be just," continued she; "I cannot now misunderstand the object of the poet: I must pity; though, as you paint her, I shall rather pity her than sympathize with her. But allow me here to offer a remark, which in these few days you have frequently suggested to me. I observe with admiration the correct, keen, penetrating glance with which you judge of poetry, especially dramatic poetry: the deepest abysses of invention are not hidden from you, the finest touches of representation cannot escape you. Without ever having viewed the objects in nature, you recognize the truth of their images: there seems, as it were, a presentiment of all the universe to lie in you, which by the harmonious touch of poetry is awakened and unfolded. For in truth," continued she, "from without, you receive not much: I have scarcely seen a person that so little knew, so totally misknew, the people he lived with, as you do. Allow me to say it: in hearing you expound the mysteries of Shakespeare, one would think you had just descended from a synod of the gods, and had listened there while they were taking counsel how to form men; in seeing you transact with your fellows, I could imagine you to be the first large-born child of the Creation, standing agape, and gazing with strange wonderment and edifying good nature at lions and apes and sheep and elephants, and true-heartedly addressing them as your

equals, simply because they were there, and in motion like yourself."

"The feeling of my ignorance in this respect," said Wilhelm, "often gives me pain; and I should thank you, worthy friend, if you would help me to get a little better insight into life. From youth, I have been accustomed to direct the eyes of my spirit inwards rather than outwards; and hence it is very natural that, to a certain extent, I should be acquainted with man, while of men I have not the smallest knowledge. . . ."

One of the conditions under which our friend had gone upon the stage was not acceded to by Serlo without some limitations. Wilhelm had required that *Hamlet* should be played entire and unmutilated: the other had agreed to this strange stipulation, in so far as it was *possible*. On this point they had many a contest; for as to what was possible or not possible, and what parts of the piece could be omitted without mutilating it, the two were of very different opinions.

Wilhelm was still in that happy season when one cannot understand how, in the woman one loves, in the writer one honors, there should be anything defective. The feeling they excite in us is so entire, so accordant with itself, that we cannot help attributing the same perfect harmony to the objects themselves. Serlo again was willing to discriminate, perhaps too willing: his acute understanding could usually discern in any work of art nothing but a more or less *im*perfect whole. He thought that, as pieces usually stood, there was little reason to be chary about meddling with them; that of course Shakespeare, and particularly *Hamlet*, would need to suffer much curtailment.

But, when Serlo talked of separating the wheat from the chaff, Wilhelm would not hear of it. "It is not chaff and wheat together," said he: "it is a trunk with boughs, twigs, leaves, buds, blossoms, and fruit. Is not the one there with the others, and by means of them?" To which Serlo would reply that people did not bring a whole tree upon the table; that the artist was required to present his guests with silver apples in platters of silver. They exhausted their invention in similitudes, and their opinions seemed still farther to diverge.

Our friend was on the borders of despair when on one occasion, after much debating, Serlo counseled him to take the simple plan,—to make a brief resolution, to grasp his pen, to peruse the tragedy; dashing out whatever would not answer, compressing several personages into one: and if he was not skilled in such proceedings, or had not heart enough for going through with them, he might leave the task to him, the manager, who would engage to make short work with it.

"That is not our bargain," answered Wilhelm. "How can you, with all your taste, show so much levity?"

"My friend," cried Serlo, "you yourself will erelong feel it and show it. I know too well how shocking such a mode of treating works is: perhaps it never was allowed on any theatre till now. But where, indeed, was ever one so slighted as ours? Authors force us on this wretched clipping system, and the public tolerates it. How many pieces have we, pray, which do not overstep the measure of our numbers, of our decorations and theatrical machinery, of the proper time, of the fit alternation of dialogue, and the physical strength of the actor? And yet we are to play, and play, and

constantly give novelties. Ought we not to profit by our privilege, then, since we accomplish just as much by mutilated works as by entire ones? It is the public itself that grants the privilege. Few Germans, perhaps few men of any modern nation, have a proper sense of an æsthetic whole:—they praise and blame by passages; they are charmed by passages; and who has greater reason to rejoice at this than actors, since the stage is ever but a patched and piece-work matter?"

"Is!" cried Wilhelm; "but *must* it ever be so? Must everything that is continue? Convince me not that you are right, for no power on earth should force me to abide by any contract which I had concluded with the grossest misconceptions."

Serlo gave a merry turn to the business, and persuaded him to review once more the many conversations they had had together about *Hamlet*, and himself to invent some means of properly reforming the piece.

After a few days, which he had spent alone, our friend returned with a cheerful look. "I am much mistaken," cried he, "if I have not now discovered how the whole is to be managed: nay, I am convinced that Shakespeare himself would have arranged it so, had not his mind been too exclusively directed to the ruling interest, and perhaps misled by the novels which furnished him with his materials."

"Let us hear," said Serlo, placing himself with an air of solemnity upon the sofa: "I will listen calmly, but judge with rigor."

"I am not afraid of you," said Wilhelm; "only hear me. In the composition of this play, after the most accurate investigation and the most mature reflection, I distinguish two classes of objects. The first are

the grand internal relations of the persons and events, the powerful effects which arise from the characters and proceedings of the main figures: these, I hold, are individually excellent; and the order in which they are presented cannot be improved. No kind of interference must be suffered to destroy them, or even essentially to change their form. These are the things which stamp themselves deep into the soul, which all men long to see, which no one dares to meddle with. Accordingly, I understand, they have almost wholly been retained in all our German theatres. But our countrymen have erred, in my opinion, with regard to the second class of objects, which may be observed in this tragedy: I allude to the external relations of the persons, whereby they are brought from place to place, or combined in various ways, by certain accidental incidents. These they have looked upon as very unimportant; have spoken of them only in passing, or left them out altogether. Now, indeed, it must be owned, these threads are slack and slender; yet they run through the entire piece, and bind together much that would otherwise fall asunder, and does actually fall asunder, when you cut them off, and imagine you have done enough and more, if you have left the ends hanging.

"Among these external relations I include the disturbances in Norway, the war with young Fortinbras, the embassy to his uncle, the settling of that feud, the march of young Fortinbras to Poland, and his coming back at the end; of the same sort are Horatio's return from Wittenberg, Hamlet's wish to go thither, the journey of Laertes to France, his return, the despatch of Hamlet into England, his capture by pirates, the death of the two courtiers by the letter which they

carried. All these circumstances and events would be very fit for expanding and lengthening a novel; but here they injure exceedingly the unity of the piece, particularly as the hero has no plan, and are, in consequence, entirely out of place."

"For once in the right!" cried Serlo.

"Do not interrupt me," answered Wilhelm; "perhaps you will not always think me right. These errors are like temporary props of an edifice: they must not be removed till we have built a firm wall in their stead. My project, therefore, is not at all to change those first-mentioned grand situations, or at least as much as possible to spare them, both collectively and individually; but with respect to these external, single, dissipated, and dissipating motives, to cast them all at once away, and substitute a solitary one instead of them."

"And this?" inquired Serlo, springing up from his recumbent posture.

"It lies in the piece itself," answered Wilhelm, "only I employ it rightly. There are disturbances in Norway. You shall hear my plan, and try it.

"After the death of Hamlet's father, the Norwegians, lately conquered, grow unruly. The viceroy of that country sends his son, Horatio, an old school-friend of Hamlet's, and distinguished above every other for his bravery and prudence, to Denmark, to press forward the equipment of the fleet, which, under the new luxurious king, proceeds but slowly. Horatio has known the former king, having fought in his battles, having even stood in favor with him,—a circumstance by which the first ghost-scene will be nothing injured. The new sovereign gives Horatio audience and sends Laertes into Norway with intelligence that the fleet

will soon arrive; whilst Horatio is commissioned to accelerate the preparation of it: and the Queen, on the other hand, will not consent that Hamlet, as he wishes, should go to sea along with him."

"Heaven be praised!" cried Serlo; "we shall now get rid of Wittenberg and the university, which was always a sorry piece of business. I think your idea extremely good; for, except these two distant objects, Norway and the fleet, the spectator will not be required to *fancy* anything: the rest he will *see;* the rest takes place before him; whereas his imagination, on the other plan, was hunted over all the world."

"You easily perceive," said Wilhelm, "how I shall contrive to keep the other parts together. When Hamlet tells Horatio of his uncle's crime, Horatio counsels him to go to Norway in his company, to secure the affections of the army, and return in warlike force. Hamlet also is becoming dangerous to the King and Queen; they find no readier method of deliverance than to send him in the fleet, with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be spies upon him; and, as Laertes in the meantime comes from France, they determine that this youth, exasperated even to murder, shall go after him. Unfavorable winds detain the fleet: Hamlet returns; for his wandering through the churchyard, perhaps some lucky motive may be thought of; his meeting with Laertes in Ophelia's grave is a grand moment, which we must not part with. After this, the King resolves that it is better to get quit of Hamlet on the spot: the festival of his departure, the pretended reconcilement with Laertes, are now solemnized; on which occasion knightly sports are held, and Laertes fights with Hamlet. Without the four corpses, I cannot end the

play: no one must survive. The right of popular election now again comes in force; and Hamlet, while dying, gives his vote to Horatio."

"Quick! quick!" said Serlo, "sit down and work the play: your plan has my entire approbation; only let not your zeal evaporate."

Wilhelm had already been for some time busied with translating *Hamlet;* making use, as he labored, of Wieland's spirited performance, through which he had first become acquainted with Shakespeare. What had been omitted in Wieland's work he replaced, and had secured a complete version, at the very time when Serlo and he were pretty well agreed about the way of treating it. He now began, according to his plan, to cut out and insert, to separate and unite, to alter, and often to restore; for, satisfied as he was with his own conception, it still appeared to him as if, in executing it, he were but spoiling the original.

When all was finished, he read his work to Serlo and the rest. They declared themselves exceedingly contented with it: Serlo, in particular, made many flattering observations.

"You have felt very justly," said he, among other things, "that some external circumstances must accompany this play, but that they must be simpler than those which the great poet has employed. What takes place without the theatre, what the spectator does not see but must imagine, is like a background, in front of which the acting figures move. Your large and simple prospect of the fleet and Norway will do much to improve the play: if this were altogether taken from it, we should have but a family scene remaining; and

the great idea that here a kingly house, by internal crimes and incongruities, goes down to ruin, would not be presented with its proper dignity. But if the former background were left standing, so manifold, so fluctuating and confused, it would hurt the impression of the figures."

Wilhelm again took Shakespeare's part; alleging that he wrote for islanders, for Englishmen, who generally in the distance were accustomed to see little else than ships and voyages, the coast of France and privateers; and thus what perplexed and distracted others was to them quite natural.

Serlo assented; and both were of opinion that, as the play was now to be produced upon the German stage, this more serious and simple background was the best adapted for the German mind.

The parts had been distributed before: Serlo undertook Polonius; Aurelia, Ophelia; Laertes was already designated by his name; a young, thick-set, jolly newcomer was to be Horatio; the King and Ghost alone occasioned some perplexity, for both of these no one but Old Boisterous remaining. Serlo proposed to make the Pedant, King; but against this our friend protested in the strongest terms. They could resolve on nothing.

Wilhelm had also allowed both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to continue in his play. "Why not compress them into one?" said Serlo. "This abbreviation will not cost you much."

"Heaven keep me from all such curtailments!" answered Wilhelm; "they destroy at once the sense and the effect. What these two persons are and do it is impossible to represent by one. In such small mat-

ters we discover Shakespeare's greatness. These s approaches, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling, flattering, this whisking agility, this wagging of the tail, this allness and emptiness, this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity,—how can they be expressed by a single man? There ought to be at least a dozen of these people, if they could be had; for it is only in society that they are anything; they are society itself; and Shakespeare showed no little wisdom and discernment in bringing in a pair of them. Besides, I need them as a couple that may be contrasted with the single, noble, excellent Horatio. . . ."

Though in this remolding of *Hamlet* many characters had been cut off, a sufficient number of them still remained,—a number which the company was scarcely adequate to meet.

"If this is the way of it," said Serlo, "our prompter himself must issue from his den, and mount the stage, and become a personage like one of us. . . ."

"The very man!" exclaimed our friend, "the very man! What a fortunate discovery! We have now the proper hand for delivering the passage of 'The rugged Pyrrhus.'"

"One requires your eagerness," said Serlo, "before he can employ every object in the use it was meant for."

"In truth," said Wilhelm, "I was very much afraid we should be obliged to leave this passage out: the omission would have lamed the whole play."

"Well! That is what I cannot understand," observed Aurelia.

"I hope you will erelong be of my opinion," answered Wilhelm. "Shakespeare has introduced these traveling players with a double purpose. The person who recites the death of Priam with such feeling, in the *first* place, makes a deep impression on the prince himself; he sharpens the conscience of the wavering youth: and, accordingly, this scene becomes a prelude to that other, where, in the *second* place, the little play produces such effect upon the King. Hamlet sees himself reproved and put to shame by the player, who feels so deep a sympathy in foreign and fictitious woes; and the thought of making an experiment upon the conscience of his stepfather is in consequence suggested to him. What a royal monologue is that which ends the second act! How charming it will be to speak it!

> "'Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
> Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
> That, from her working, all his visage wann'd;
> Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
> With forms to his conceit? and all for nothing!
> For Hecuba!
> What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
> That he should weep for her?'" . . .

In particular, one evening, the manager was very merry in speaking of the part of Polonius, and how he meant to take it up. "I engage," said he, "on this occasion, to present a very meritorious person in his best aspect. The repose and security of this old gentleman, his emptiness and his significance, his exterior gracefulness and interior meanness, his frankness and sycophancy, his sincere roguery and deceitful truth, I will introduce with all due elegance in their fit propor-

tions. This respectable, gray-haired, enduring, time-serving half-knave, I will represent in the most courtly style: the occasional roughness and coarseness of our author's strokes will further me here. I will speak like a book when I am prepared beforehand, and like an ass when I utter the overflowings of my heart. I will be insipid and absurd enough to chime in with every one, and acute enough never to observe when people make a mock of me. I have seldom taken up a part with so much zeal and roguishness."

"Could I but hope as much from mine!" exclaimed Aurelia. "I have neither youth nor softness enough to be at home in this character. One thing alone I am too sure of,—the feeling that turns Ophelia's brain, I shall not want."

"We must not take the matter up so strictly," said our friend. "For my share, I am certain that the wish to act the character of Hamlet has led me exceedingly astray throughout my study of the play. And now, the more I look into the part, the more clearly do I see that, in my whole form and physiognomy, there is not one feature such as Shakespeare meant for Hamlet. When I consider with what nicety the various circumstances are adapted to each other, I can scarcely hope to produce even a tolerable effect."

"You are entering on your new career with becoming conscientiousness," said Serlo. "The actor fits himself to his part as he can, and the part to him as it must. But how has Shakespeare drawn his Hamlet? Is he so utterly unlike you?"

"In the first place," answered Wilhelm, "he is fair-haired."

"That I call far-fetched," observed Aurelia. "How do you infer that?"

"As a Dane, as a Northman, he is fair-haired and blue-eyed by descent."

"And you think Shakespeare had this in view?"

"I do not find it specially expressed; but, by comparison of passages, I think it incontestable. The fencing tires him; the sweat is running from his brow; and the Queen remarks, '*He's fat, and scant of breath.*' Can you conceive him to be otherwise than plump and fair-haired? Brown-complexioned people, in their youth, are seldom plump. And does not his wavering melancholy, his soft lamenting, his irresolute activity, accord with such a figure? From a dark-haired young man, you would look for more decision and impetuosity."

"You are spoiling my imagination," cried Aurelia; "away with your fat Hamlets! Do not set your well-fed prince before us! Give us rather any *succedaneum* that will move us, will delight us. The intention of the author is of less importance to us than our own enjoyment, and we need a charm that is adapted for us."

One evening a dispute arose among our friends about the novel and the drama, and which of them deserved the preference. Serlo said it was a fruitless and misunderstood debate: both might be superior in their kinds, only each must keep within the limits proper to it.

"About their limits and their kinds," said Wilhelm, "I confess myself not altogether clear."

"Who *is* so?" said the other; "and yet perhaps it were worth while to come a little closer to the business."

They conversed together long upon the matter; and, in fine, the following was nearly the result of their discussion:—

"In the novel as well as in the drama, it is human nature and human action that we see. The difference between these sorts of fiction lies not merely in their outward form,—not merely in the circumstance that the personages of the one are made to speak, while those of the other have commonly their history narrated. Unfortunately many dramas are but novels which proceed by dialogue; and it would not be impossible to write a drama in the shape of letters.

"But, in the novel, it is chiefly *sentiments* and *events* that are exhibited; in the drama, it is *characters* and *deeds*. The novel must go slowly forward; and the sentiments of the hero, by some means or another, must restrain the tendency of the whole to unfold itself and to conclude. The drama, on the other hand, must hasten; and the character of the hero must press forward to the end: it does not restrain, but is restrained. The novel-hero must be suffering,—at least he must not in a high degree be active; in the dramatic one, we look for activity and deeds. Grandison, Clarissa, Pamela, the Vicar of Wakefield, Tom Jones himself, are, if not suffering, at least retarding, personages; and the incidents are all in some sort modeled by their sentiments. In the drama the hero models nothing by himself; all things withstand him; and he clears and casts away the hindrances from off his path, or else sinks under them."

Our friends were also of opinion that, in the novel, some degree of scope may be allowed to Chance, but that it must always be led and guided by the sentiments of the personages; on the other hand, that Fate, which, by means of outward, unconnected circumstances, proceeds to an unforeseen catastrophe, can have place only in the drama; that Chance may produce pathetic situations, but never tragic ones; Fate, on the other hand, ought always to be terrible,—and is, in the highest sense, tragic, when it brings into a ruinous concatenation the guilty man and the guiltless that was unconcerned with him.

These considerations led them back to the play of *Hamlet*, and the peculiarities of its composition. The hero in this case, it was observed, is endowed more properly with sentiments than with a character: it is events alone that push him on, and accordingly the play has in some measure the expansion of a novel. But as it is Fate that draws the plan, as the story issues from a deed of terror, the work is tragic in the highest sense, and admits of no other than a tragic end. . . .

The necessary preparations for scenery and dresses, and whatever else was requisite, were now proceeding. In regard to certain scenes and passages, our friend had whims of his own, which Serlo humored, partly in consideration of their bargain, partly from conviction, and because he hoped by these civilities to gain Wilhelm, and to lead him according to his own purposes the more implicitly in time to come.

Thus, for example, the King and Queen were, at the first audience, to appear sitting on the throne, with the courtiers at the sides, and Hamlet standing undis-

tinguished in the crowd. "Hamlet," said he, "must keep himself quiet; his sable dress will sufficiently point him out. He should rather shun remark than seek it. Not till the audience is ended, and the King speaks with him as with a son, should he advance, and allow the scene to take its course."

A formidable obstacle remained, in regard to the two pictures which Hamlet so passionately refers to in the scene with his mother. "We ought," said Wilhelm, "to have both of them visible, at full length, in the bottom of the chamber, near the main door; and the former king must be clad in armor, like the Ghost, and hang at the side where it enters. I could wish that the figure held its right hand in a commanding attitude, were somewhat turned away, and, as it were, looked over its shoulder, that so it might perfectly resemble the Ghost at the moment when he issues from the door. It will produce a great effect when at this instant Hamlet looks upon the Ghost, and the Queen upon the picture. The stepfather may be painted in royal ornaments, but not so striking."

There were several other points of this sort, about which we shall, perhaps, elsewhere have opportunity to speak.

"Are you, then, inexorably bent on Hamlet's dying at the end?" inquired Serlo.

"How can I keep him alive," said Wilhelm, "when the whole play is pressing him to death? We have already talked at large on that matter."

"But the public wishes him to live."

"I will show the public any other complaisance; but, as to this, I cannot. We often wish that some gallant, useful man, who is dying of a chronic disease, might

yet live longer. The family weep, and conjure the physician; but he cannot stay him: and no more than this physician can withstand the necessity of nature, can we give law to an acknowledged necessity of art. It is a false compliance with the multitude, to raise in them emotions which they *wish*, when these are not emotions which they *ought*, to feel."

"Whoever pays the cash," said Serlo, "may require the ware according to his liking."

"Doubtless, in some degree," replied our friend; "but a great public should be reverenced, not used as children are when peddlers wish to hook the money from them. By presenting excellence to the people, you should gradually excite in them a taste and feeling for the excellent; and they will pay their money with double satisfaction when reason itself has nothing to object against this outlay. The public you may flatter, as you do a well-beloved child, to better, to enlighten it; not as you do a pampered child of quality, to perpetuate the error you profit from."

In this manner various other topics were discussed relating to the question, What might still be changed in the play, and what must of necessity remain untouched? We shall not enter farther on those points at present; but, perhaps, at some future time we may submit this altered *Hamlet* itself to such of our readers as feel any interest in the subject.

SHAKESPEARE AD INFINITUM

(1813-16)

THERE has already been so much said about Shakespeare that it would seem as if there was nothing left to say; and yet it is the characteristic of genius ever to be stimulating other men's genius. In the present case I wish to consider Shakespeare from more than one point of view,—first as a poet in general, then in comparison with the classic and modern writers, and finally as a writer of poetic drama. I shall attempt to work out what the imitation of his art has meant to us, and what it can mean in the future. I shall express my agreement with what has been written by reiterating it, and express my dissent briefly and positively, without involving myself in conflict and contradiction. I proceed to the first topic.

I. Shakespeare as Poet in General

The highest achievement possible to a man is the full consciousness of his own feelings and thoughts, for this gives him the means of knowing intimately the hearts of others. Now there are men who are born with a natural talent for this and who cultivate it by experience towards practical ends. From this talent springs the ability to profit in a higher sense by the world and its opportunities. Now the poet is born with

the same talent, only he cultivates it not for his immediate worldly purposes but for a loftier spiritual and universal purpose. If we call Shakespeare one of the greatest poets, we mean that few have perceived the world as accurately as he, that few who have expressed their inner contemplation of it have given the reader deeper insight into its meaning and consciousness. It becomes for us completely transparent: we find ourselves at once in the most intimate touch with virtue and vice, greatness and meanness, nobility and infamy, and all this through the simplest of means. If we ask what these means are, it seems as if they were directed towards our visual apprehension. But we are mistaken; Shakespeare's works are not for the physical vision. I shall attempt to explain what I mean.

The eye, the most facile of our organs of receptivity, may well be called the clearest of the senses; but the inner sense is still clearer, and to it by means of words belongs the most sensitive and clear receptivity. This is particularly obvious when what we apprehend with the eye seems alien and unimpressive considered in and for itself. But Shakespeare speaks always to our inner sense. Through this, the picture-world of imagination becomes animated, and a complete effect results, of which we can give no reckoning. Precisely here lies the ground for the illusion that everything is taking place before our eyes. But if we study the works of Shakespeare enough, we find that they contain much more of spiritual truth than of spectacular action. He makes happen what can easily be conceived by the imagination, indeed what can be better imagined than seen. Hamlet's ghost, Macbeth's witches, many fearful incidents, get their value only through the power of the

imagination, and many of the minor scenes get their force from the same source. In reading, all these things pass easily through our minds, and seem quite appropriate, whereas in representation on the stage they would strike us unfavorably and appear not only unpleasant but even disgusting.

Shakespeare gets his effect by means of the living word, and it is for this reason that one should hear him read, for then the attention is not distracted either by a too adequate or a too inadequate stage-setting. There is no higher or purer pleasure than to sit with closed eyes and hear a naturally expressive voice recite, not declaim, a play of Shakespeare's. According to the delineation of the characters we can picture to ourselves certain forms, but more particularly are we able by the succession of words and phrases to learn what is passing in their souls; the characters seem to have agreed to leave us in the dark, in doubt, about nothing. To that end conspire heroes and lackeys, gentlemen and slaves, kings and heralds; indeed even the subordinate characters are often more expressive in this way than the leading figures. Everything which in an affair of great importance breathes only secretly through the air, or lies hidden in the hearts of men, is here openly expressed. What the soul anxiously conceals and represses is here brought freely and abundantly to the light. We experience the truth of life,—how, we do not know!

Shakespeare associates himself with the World-Spirit; like it, he explores the world; from neither is anything hidden. But whereas it is the business of the World-Spirit to keep its secrets both before and after the event, it is the work of the poet to tell them,

and take us into his confidence before the event or in the very action itself. The depraved man of power, the well-intentioned dullard, the passionate lover, the quiet scholar, all carry their heart in their hand, often contrary to verisimilitude. Every one is candid and loquacious. It is enough that the secret must out, and even the stones would publish it. The inanimate insists upon speaking; the elements, the phenomena of sky, earth and sea, thunder and lightning, wild animals, lift their voice, often apparently symbolically, but all joining in the revelation.

The whole civilized world too brings its treasures to Shakespeare; Art and Science, Commerce and Industry, all bear him their gifts. Shakespeare's poems are a great animated fair; and it is to his own country that he owes his riches.

For back of him is England, the sea-encircled and mist-covered country, whose enterprise reaches all the parts of the earth. The poet lives at a noble and important epoch, and presents all its glory and its deficiencies with great vivacity; indeed, he would hardly produce such an effect upon us were it not just his own life-epoch that he was representing. No one despised the outer costume of men more than he; but he understood well the inner man, and here all are similar. It is said that he has delineated the Romans with wonderful skill. I cannot see it. They are Englishmen to the bone; but they are human, thoroughly human, and thus the Roman toga presumably fits them. When one takes this into consideration, one finds his anachronisms entirely admirable; indeed, it is just his neglect of the outer form that makes his works so vital.

Enough of these slight words, which cannot begin

to sound the praises of Shakespeare. His friends and worshipers will have to add many a word to them. But one more remark:—it would be hard to find a poet each of whose works was more thoroughly pervaded by a definite and effective idea than his.

Thus *Coriolanus* is permeated by the idea of anger at the refusal of the lower classes to recognize the superiority of their betters. In *Julius Cæsar* everything hinges on the idea that the upper classes are not willing to see the highest place in the State occupied, since they wrongly imagine that they are able to act together. *Antony and Cleopatra* expresses with a thousand tongues the idea that pleasure and action are ever incompatible. And so one will ever find, in searching his works, new cause for astonishment and admiration.

II. Shakespeare Compared with the Ancients and the Moderns

The interests which vitalize Shakespeare's great genius are interests which centre in this world. For if prophecy and madness, dreams, omens, portents, fairies and gnomes, ghosts, imps, and conjurers introduce a magical element which so beautifully pervades his poems, yet these figures are in no way the basic elements of his works, but rest on a broad basis of the truth and fidelity of life, so that everything that comes from his pen seems to us genuine and sound. It has already been suggested that he belongs not so much to the poets of the modern era, which has been called "romantic," but much more to the "naturalistic" school, since his work is permeated with the reality of the present, and

scarcely touches the emotions of unsatisfied desire, except at his highest points.

Disregarding this, however, he is, from a closer point of view, a decidedly modern poet, separated from the ancients by an enormous gulf, not perhaps with regard to his outer form, which is here beside our point, but with regard to his inner and most profound spirit.

Here let me say that it is not my idea to use the following terminology as exhaustive or exclusive; it is an attempt not so much to add another new antithesis to those already recognized, as to indicate that it is already contained in these. These are the antitheses:—

Ancient	Modern
Natural	Sentimental
Pagan	Christian
Classic	Romantic
Realistic	Idealistic
Necessity	Freedom
Duty (*sollen*)	Will (*wollen*) [1]

The greatest ills to which men are exposed, as well as the most numerous, arise from a certain inner conflict

[1] "Goethe, in a thoughtful essay, *Shakespeare und kein Ende,* written many years later than his famous criticism of Hamlet in *Wilhelm Meister,* says that the distinction between the two [ancient and modern drama] is the difference between *sollen* and *wollen,* that is, between *must* and *would.* He means that in the Greek drama the catastrophe is foreordained by an inexorable Destiny, while the element of free will, and consequently choice, is the very axis of the modern. The definition is conveniently portable, but it has its limitations. Goethe's attention was too exclusively fixed on the fate tragedies of the Greeks, and upon Shakespeare among the moderns. In the Spanish drama, for example, custom, loyalty, honor, and religion are as imperative and as inevitable as doom. In the *Antigone,* on the other hand, the crisis lies in the character of the protagonist."—James Russell Lowell, *Shakespeare Once More.*

between duty and will, as well as between duty and its accomplishment, and desire and its accomplishment; and it is these conflicts which bring us so often into trouble in the course of our lives. Little difficulties, springing from a slight error which, though taking us by surprise, can be solved easily, give the clue to situations of comedy. The great difficulties, on the other hand, unresolved and unresolvable, give us tragedy.

Predominating in the old poems is the conflict between duty and performance, in the new between desire and accomplishment. Let us put this decided divergency among the other antitheses and see if it does not prove suggestive. In both epochs, I have said, there predominates now this side, now that; but since duty and desire are not radically separated in men's characters, both will be found together, even if one prevails and the other is subordinate. Duty is imposed upon men; "must" is a bitter pill. The Will man imposes upon himself; man's will is his kingdom of heaven. A long-continued obligation is burdensome, the inability to perform it even terrible; but a constant will is pleasurable, and with a firm will men can console themselves for their inability to accomplish their desire.

Let us consider a game of cards as a kind of poem; it consists of both those elements. The form of the game, bound up with chance, plays here the rôle of necessity, just as the ancients knew it under the form of Fate; the will, bound up with the skill of the player, works in the other direction. In this sense I might call whist "classic." The form of play limits the operation of chance, and even of the will itself. I have to

play, in company with definite partners and opponents, with the cards which come into my hand, make the best of a long series of chance plays, without being able to control or parry them. In Ombre and similar games, the contrary is the case. Here are many openings left for skill and daring. I can disavow the cards that fall to my hand, make them count in different ways, half or completely discard them, get help by luck, and in the play get the best advantage out of the worst cards. Thus this kind of game resembles perfectly the modern mode of thought and literature.

Ancient tragedy was based on unescapable necessity, which was only sharpened and accelerated by an opposing will. Here is the seat of all that is fearful in the oracles, the region in which Œdipus lords it over all. Less tragic appears necessity in the guise of duty in the "Antigone"; and in how many forms does it not appear! But all necessity is despotic, whether it belong to the realm of Reason, like custom and civil law, or to Nature, like the laws of Becoming, and Growing and Passing-away, of Life and of Death. Before all these we tremble, without realizing that it is the good of the *whole* that is aimed at. The will, on the contrary, is free, appears free, and is advantageous to the *individual*. Thus the will is a flatterer, and takes possession of men as soon as they learn to recognize it. It is the god of the modern world. Dedicated to it, we are afraid of opposing doctrines, and here lies the crux of that eternal division which separates our art and thought from the ancients. Through the motive of Necessity, tragedy became mighty and strong; through the motive of Will, weak and feeble. Out of the latter arose the so-called Drama, in which dread

Necessity is overcome and dissolved through the Will. But just because this comes to the aid of our weakness we feel moved when, after painful tension, we are at last a little encouraged and consoled.

As I turn now, after these preliminaries, to Shakespeare, I must express the hope that the reader himself will make the proper comparisons and applications. It is Shakespeare's unique distinction that he has combined in such remarkable fashion the old and the new. In his plays Will and Necessity struggle to maintain an equilibrium; both contend powerfully, yet always so that Will remains at a disadvantage.

No one has shown perhaps better than he the connection between Necessity and Will in the individual character. The person, considered as a character, is under a certain necessity; he is constrained, appointed to a certain particular line of action; but as a human being he has a will, which is unconfined and universal in its demands. Thus arises an inner conflict, and Shakespeare is superior to all other writers in the significance with which he endows this. But now an outer conflict may arise, and the individual through it may become so aroused that an insufficient will is raised through circumstance to the level of irremissible necessity. These motives I have referred to earlier in the case of Hamlet; but the motive is repeated constantly in Shakespeare,—Hamlet through the agency of the ghost; Macbeth through the witches, Hecate, and his wife; Brutus through his friends gets into a dilemma and situation to which they were not equal; even in Coriolanus the same motive is found. This Will, which reaches beyond the power of the individual, is decidedly

modern. But since in Shakespeare it does not spring from within, but is developed through external circumstance, it becomes a sort of Necessity, and approaches the classical motive. For all the heroes of ancient poetry willed only what was possible to men, and from this arose that beautiful balance between Necessity, Will, and Accomplishment. Still their Necessity is a little too severe for it really to be able to please us, even though we may wonder at and admire it. A Necessity which more or less, or even completely, excludes human freedom does not chime with our views any longer. It is true that Shakespeare in his own way has approximated this, but in making this Necessity a moral necessity he has, to our pleasure and astonishment, united the spirit of the ancient and the modern worlds. If we are to learn anything from him, here is the point where we must study in his school. Instead of singing the praises of our Romanticism so exclusively, and sticking to it so uncritically,—our Romanticism, which need not be chidden or rejected,—and thus mistaking and obscuring its strong, solid practical aspect, we should rather attempt to make this great fusion between the old and the new, even though it does seem inconsistent and paradoxical; and all the more should we make the attempt, because a great and unique master, whom we value most highly, and, often without knowing why, give homage to above all others, has already most effectively accomplished this miracle. To be sure, he had the advantage of living in a true time of harvest, and of working in a vigorous Protestant country, where the madness of bigotry was silent for a time, so that freedom was given to a true child of

nature, such as Shakespeare was, to develop religiously his own pure inner nature, without reference to any established religion.

The preceding words were written in the summer of 1813; I ask that the reader will not now find fault with me, but simply recall what was said above,—that this is merely an individual attempt to show how different poetic geniuses have tried to reconcile and resolve that tremendous antithesis which has appeared in their works in so many forms. To say more would be superfluous, since interest has been centred in this question for the past few years, and excellent explanations have been given us. Above all I wish to mention Blümner's highly valuable treatise, *On the Idea of Fate in the Tragedies of Æschylus*, and the excellent criticism of it in the supplement of the *Jenaische Literaturzeitung*. Therefore, I come without further comment to my third point, which relates immediately to the German theatre and to Schiller's efforts to establish it for the future.

III. Shakespeare as Playwright

When lovers of art wish to enjoy any work, they contemplate and delight in it as a whole, that is, they try to feel and apprehend the unity which the artist can bring to them. Whoever, on the other hand, wishes to judge such works theoretically, to assert some judgment about them, or instruct some one about them, must use his discriminating and analytic faculty. This we attempted to carry out when we discussed Shakespeare, first, as poet in general, and then compared

him with the ancient and modern poets. Now we intend to close the matter by considering him as a playwright, or poet of the theatre.

Shakespeare's fame and excellence belong to the history of poetry; but it is an injustice towards all playwrights of earlier and more recent times to give him his entire merit in the annals of the theatre.

A universally recognized talent may make of its capacities some use which is problematical. Not everything which the great do is done in the best fashion. So Shakespeare belongs by necessity in the annals of poetry; in the annals of the theatre he appears only by accident. Since we can honor him so unreservedly in the first case, it behooves us in the second to explain the conditions to which he had to accommodate himself, but not therefore to extol these conditions as either admirable or worthy of imitation.

We must distinguish closely-related poetic *genres*, however often they may be confused and merged together in actual treatment,—epic, dialogue, drama, play. *Epic* requires the verbal delivery to the crowd through the mouth of an individual; *dialogue*, conversation in a narrow circle, where the crowd may eventually listen; *drama*, conversation bound up with action, even if enacted only before the imagination; *play*, all three together, in so far as they appeal to the sense of vision, and can be embodied under certain conditions of personal presence and stage-setting.

Shakespeare's works are in this sense highly dramatic; by his treatment, his revelation of the inner life, he wins the reader; the theatrical demands appear to him unimportant, and so he takes it easy, and we, spiritually speaking, take it easy with him. We pass with him

from place to place; our power of imagination provides all the episodes which he omits. We even feel grateful to him for arousing our imagination in so profitable a way. Since he exhibits everything in dramatic form, he renders easy the working of our imaginations; for with the "stage that signifies the world," we are more familiar than with the world itself, and we can read and hear the most phantastic things, and still imagine that they might pass before our eyes on the stage. This accounts for the frequently bungling dramatizations of favorite novels.

Strictly speaking, nothing is theatrical except what is immediately symbolical to the eye: an important action, that is, which signifies a still more important one. That Shakespeare knew how to attain this summit, that moment witnesses where the son and heir in *Henry IV* takes the crown from the side of the slumbering king, who lies sick unto death,—takes the crown and marches proudly away with it. But these are only moments, scattered jewels, separated by much that is untheatrical. Shakespeare's whole method finds in the stage itself something unwieldy and hostile. His great talent is that of a universal interpreter, or "epitomizer" (*Epitomator*), and since the poet in essence appears as universal interpreter of Nature, so we must recognize Shakespeare's great genius as lying in this realm; it would be only falsehood—and in no sense is this to his dishonor—were we to say that the stage was a worthy field for his genius. These limitations of the stage, however, have forced upon him certain limitations of his own. But he does not, like other poets, pick out disconnected materials for his separate works, but puts an idea at the centre, and to it relates the world and

the universe. As he works over and boils down ancient and modern history, he can often make use of the material of old chronicles; indeed, he often adapts them word for word. With romances he does not deal so conscientiously, as *Hamlet* shows us. *Romeo and Juliet* is truer to the original; still he almost destroys the tragic content of it by his two comic characters, Mercutio and the old nurse, played apparently by two favorite actors, the nurse perhaps originally by a male performer. If one examines the construction of the piece carefully, however, one notices that these two figures, and what surrounds them, come in only as farcical interludes, and must be as unbearable to the minds of the lovers on the stage as they are to us.

But Shakespeare appears most remarkable when he revises and pieces together already existing plays. In *King John* and *Lear* we can make this comparison, for the older plays are extant. But in these cases, too, he turns out to be more of a poet than playwright.

In closing, let us proceed to the solution of the riddle. The primitiveness of the English stage has been brought to our attention by scholars. There is no trace in it of that striving after realism, which we have developed with the improvement of machinery and the art of perspective and costuming, and from which we should find it hard to turn back to that childlike beginning of the stage,—a scaffolding, where one saw little, where everything was *signified*, where the audience was content to assume a royal chamber behind a green curtain; and the trumpeter, who always blew his trumpet at a certain place, and all the rest of it. Who would be content to-day to put up with such a stage? But amid such surroundings, Shakespeare's plays were

highly interesting stories, only told by several persons, who, in order to make somewhat more of an impression, had put on masks, and, when it was necessary, moved back and forth, entered and left the stage; but left to the spectator nevertheless the task of imagining at his pleasure Paradise and palaces on the empty stage.

How else then did Schroeder acquire the great distinction of bringing Shakespeare's plays to the German stage, except by the fact that he was the "epitomizer" of the "epitomizer"!

Schroeder confined himself exclusively to effect; everything else he discarded, even many necessary things, if they seemed to injure the effect which he wanted to produce on his country and his time. Thus by the omission, for instance, of the first scenes of *King Lear*, he annulled the character of the play. And he was right, for in this scene Lear seems so absurd that we are not able, in what follows, to ascribe to his daughters the entire guilt. We are sorry for the old man, but we do not feel real pity for him; and it is pity that Schroeder wishes to arouse, as well as abhorrence for the daughters, who are indeed unnatural, but not wholly blameworthy.

In the old play, which Shakespeare revised, this scene produces in the course of the action the loveliest effect. Lear flees to France; the daughters and the stepson, from romantic caprice, make a pilgrimage over the sea, and meet the old man, who does not recognize them. Here everything is sweet, where Shakespeare's loftier tragic genius has embittered us. A comparison of these plays will give the thoughtful reader ever fresh pleasure.

Many years ago the superstition crept into Germany

that Shakespeare must be given literally word for word, even if actors and audience were murdered in the process. The attempts, occasioned by an excellent and exact translation, were nowhere successful, of which fact the painstaking and repeated endeavors of the stage at Weimar are the best witness. If we wish to see a Shakespearean play, we must take up again Schroeder's version; but the notion that in the staging of Shakespeare not an iota may be omitted, senseless as it is, one hears constantly repeated. If the defenders of this opinion maintain the upper hand, in a few years Shakespeare will be quite driven from the stage, which for that matter would be no great misfortune; for then the reader, whether he be solitary or sociable, will be able to get so much the purer pleasure out of him.

They have, however, with the idea of making an attempt along the lines of which we have spoken in detail above, revised *Romeo and Juliet* for the theatre at Weimar. The principles according to which this was done we shall develop before long, and it will perhaps become apparent why this version, whose staging is by no means difficult, although it must be handled artistically and carefully, did not take on the German stage. Attempts of a similar kind are going on, and perhaps something is preparing for the future, for frequent endeavors do not always show immediate effects.

FIRST EDITION OF *HAMLET*

(1827)

The First Edition of the Tragedy of Hamlet, by William Shakespeare, London, 1603. Reprinted by Fleischer, Leipzig, 1825.

In this book Shakespeare's devoted admirers receive a valuable present. The first unbiased reading has given me a wonderful impression. It was the old familiar masterpiece again, its action and movement in no way altered, but the most powerful and effective principal passages left untouched, just as they came from the original hand of the genius. The play was exceedingly easy and delightful to read. One thought one's self in a wholly familiar world, and yet felt something peculiar which could not be expressed, and this induced one to give the play a closer consideration, and indeed a stricter comparison with the old. Hence these few random remarks.

First of all, it was noticeable that there was no locality given, nor was there information about the stage-setting, and just as little about the division of the acts and scenes. All this was represented by "Enter" and "Exit." The imagination was allowed free play. One saw again in his mind's eye the old primitive English stage. The action took its impetuous course of life and passion, and one did not take the time to think of such things as places.

In the more recent familiar revision we find the division into acts and scenes, and locality and stage-setting are given. Whether these are by him or by later stage-managers, we leave undecided here.

The Polonius of the second revision is called Corambis in the first, and the rôle appears through this little circumstance to take on another character.

The unimportant supernumerary rôles were first designated merely by numbers, but here we find them endowed with honor and significance through being given names. We are thus reminded of Schiller, who in *Wilhelm Tell* gave names to his peasant women and some words to speak, so that they became more acceptable rôles. The poet does the same here with guards and courtiers.

If in the first edition we find a loosely written syllabication, in the later one we find it better controlled, though always without pedantry. Rhythmic passages are divided into five-foot iambics, though half and quarter verses are not avoided.

So much for the external expression. A comparison of the inner connections and relations will be of profit to any admirer who gives the work an individual study. Here are only a few suggestions.

Passages, which in the first version are only lightly sketched by the hand of genius, we find more deliberately executed, and in a way that we have to approve and admire as necessary. We come, too, upon pleasing amplifications, which may not be absolutely necessary, but which are highly welcome. Here and there we find hardly perceptible yet vivid aspersions, connective passages, even important transpositions to make a highly effective speech,—everything done with a master-hand,

with intelligence and feeling, everything thrilling our emotions and clarifying our insight.

Everywhere in the first version we admire that sureness of touch which, without lengthy reflection, seems rather as if it had been poured out spontaneously, a vivifying and illuminating discovery. And whatever excellences the poet may have given to his later work, whatever deviations he employed, at least we find nowhere any important omission or alteration. Only here and there some rather coarse and naïve expressions are expunged.

In closing we shall mention, however, a noticeable difference which concerns the costume of the Ghost. His first appearance, as we know, is in armor; he is armed from head to foot; his face is pale and sad, his glance wan and yet austere. In this guise he appears on the terrace, where the castle guard is marching up and down, and where he himself may often have drawn up his warriors.

In the closet of the Queen, on the other hand, we find mother and son in the familiar dialogue, and finally these words:—

"Queen. Hamlet, you break my heart.
Hamlet. O throw the worser part away and keep the better."

But then follows: "Enter the Ghost in his nightgowne."

Who, on first hearing this, does not find it for a moment incongruous? And yet if we grasp it, if we think it over, we shall find it right and proper. He should —indeed he must—appear first in armor, when he is

entering the place where he has rallied his warriors, where he has encouraged them to noble deeds. And now we begin to be less confident of our conviction that it was suitable to see him enter the private closet of the queen in armor, too. How much more private, homelike, terrible, is his entrance here in the form in which he used to appear—in his house apparel, his night robe, harmless and unarmed — a guise which in itself stigmatizes in the most piteous way the treachery which befell him. Let the intelligent reader, as he may, picture this to himself. Let the stage-manager, convinced of this effect, produce it in this way, if Shakespeare is to be staged in his integrity.

It is worth noting that the commentator Steevens has already criticized this scene. When Hamlet says:—

"My father in his habit as he lived!"

this discerning critic adds this note:—"If the poet means by this expression that the father is appearing in his own house costume, he has either forgotten that at the beginning he introduced him in armor, or else it must be his intention in this latter appearance to alter his attire. Hamlet's father, just as a warrior prince might do, does not always remain in armor, or sleep, as they tell of King Haakon, of Norway, with his battle-ax in his hand."

If we had been clever enough, we should have already thought of Hamlet's first utterance in this scene, when he sees the Ghost:—"What would your gracious figure?" For we have not words enough to express all that the English mean by the word "gracious,"—every-

thing that is kind and gentle, friendly and benign, tender and attractive, is fused in that word. Certainly it is no term for a hero in armor.

These doubts are happily now dispelled by the reprinting of the first edition. We are convinced anew that Shakespeare, like the Universe, is always offering us new aspects, and still remains, at the end of it all, lofty and inaccessible. For all our powers are not competent to do justice to his words, much less his genius.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

(1824)

A COMPARISON of the *Iliad* with *Troilus and Cressida* leads to similar conclusions: here, too, there is neither parody nor travesty, but, as in the case of the eagle and the owl two subjects taken from nature were put in striking contrast with each other, so here are contrasted the intellectual fibre of two epochs. The Greek poem is in the grand style, self-restrained and self-sufficient, using only the essential, and, in description and simile, disdaining all ornament,—basing itself on noble myths and tradition. The English classic, on the other hand, one might consider a happy transposition and translation of the other great work into the romantic-dramatic style.

In this connection we should not forget, however, that this piece, like many another, is based on second-hand narratives, already rendered into prose, and only half-poetical.

Yet it is also quite original, as much so as if the ancient piece had never been at all; for it requires just as profound a sincerity, just as decided a talent, to depict for us similar personalities and characters with so light a touch and so lucid a meaning, and represent them for a later age with all the human traits of that age, which thus sees itself reflected in the guise of the ancient story.

ON OTHER WRITERS

GOETHE AS A YOUNG REVIEWER

(1772)

I

Lyrical Poems, by J. C. Blum. Berlin, 1772

We no longer feel certain whether it is wise for young poets to read the ancients early. Our unimaginative mode of life stifles genius, unless the singers of freer times kindle it and open to it an atmosphere at least ideally more free; but these very singers also breathe into the soul so exotic a spirit that the very best poet, with the most fortunate genius, can soon merely support himself in his flight through his imagination, and can no longer give expression to that glowing inspiration which alone makes true poetry. Why are the poems of the old skalds, of the Celts and the old Greeks, even of the Orientals, so strong, so fiery, so great? Nature drives them to singing as it does the bird in the air. As for us (for we cannot deceive ourselves) we are driven to the lyre by an artificial and stimulated feeling, which we owe to our admiration for the ancients, and to our delight in them; and for this reason our best songs, with few exceptions, are merely imitative copies.

These remarks have been suggested by the lyrical poems of Herr Blum. This poet is certainly not without talent, and yet how seldom does he seem to be able to stand on his own feet when his Horace is not before his eyes. The latter illumines the way for him,

like Hero's torch; the moment he must go alone, he sinks. Space does not permit us to prove our point here, but we ask every reader who knows his Horace whether the poet does not grow tired and cold whenever Horace and King David do not lend him thoughts, feelings, expressions, situations, and in the case of the former even his mythology, all of which, we must feel, are seldom used except when the imagination creates with a cold heart. The well-known Horatian dialogue, *Donec gratus eram*, Kleist has translated much better; but the "Lamentation of David and Jonathan" we have never seen better versified than here. We wish the writer an unspoilt maiden, days of complete leisure, and the pure spirit of poetry without the spirit of mere authorship. The very best of poets degenerates when in composing he thinks of the public, and is filled with a yearning for fame, especially newspaper fame, rather than completely absorbed by his subject.

II

Cymbelline, a Trageay, Based on a Shakespearian Theme [by J. G. Sulzer]. Danzig, 1772.

The author, obliged by a severe illness to avoid all fatiguing work,—so we are informed in the Preface,—amused himself with the study of Shakespeare's works. We could have told him in advance that this was no reading for a convalescent; whoever wishes to share in the life that glows through Shakespeare's plays must himself be sound in body and mind. At all events, our author, moved by a cool, weak, critical modesty, regretted that so many "incongruités" should mar the "many just sentiments" and "some beauties" (as the

eminent Dr. Johnson likewise remarks) that are to be found in this play. So he resolved to separate the dross from the gold (that is *vox populi critici* in regard to Shakespeare since time immemorial), and to attempt nothing less than this: what Sophocles would approximately have done if he had tried to make a play out of the same material. So he *travestied*—no, not travestied, for then something of the appearance of the original would remain—*parodied*—no, not that either, for then something could be guessed by the very contrast—what then? what word will express the poverty that is here, compared with the infinite riches of Shakespeare!

Shakespeare, who felt the spirit of several centuries in his breast, through whose soul the life of whole centuries was stirring!—and here—comedians in silk and buckram, and daubed scene-painting! The scene a wood; in front a thick copse, through which one enters a grotto; in the background a large pasteboard rock, on which ladies and gentlemen sit, lie, are stabbed, etc.

That is the way Sophocles would have handled this theme! It is bad enough to take Shakespeare's play, whose very essence is the life of history, and reduce it to the Sophoclean unity which aims merely at presenting action; but to model it on the "Treatise on Tragedy" in the first part of the old *Leipziger Bibliothek!*[1] We are certain that every one, not merely readers of Shakespeare, will cast it aside with contempt.

[1] By Nicolai.

BYRON'S *MANFRED*

(1820)

To me Byron's tragedy of *Manfred* was a wonderful phenomenon, touching me closely. This singular but highly gifted poet has absorbed my own *Faust* into himself, and, like a hypochondriac, drawn from it the strangest sort of nourishment. Those motives and ideas which suited his purposes he has made use of, but in his own original way, so that everything seems different; and for this reason I cannot wonder enough at his genius. This transformation affects the whole so intimately that highly interesting lectures could be given on the similarity and dissimilarity which his work bears to his pattern; but I do not deny that in the long run the dull glow of a boundless and profound despair becomes irksome to us. Yet in the dissatisfaction which one feels there are always interwoven both admiration and respect.

Thus we find in this tragedy quite uniquely the very quintessence of the feelings and passions of a remarkable genius, but a genius doomed from birth to suffering and anguish. The details of his life and the characteristics of his poetry hardly permit of a just and fair criticism. He has often enough confessed his anguish: he has repeatedly presented it in his verse, and it is difficult for any one not to feel real pity for the unbearable pain which he is forever working and gnawing over in his heart.

There are two women whose shadows follow him unceasingly, and who play a large rôle in his best-known works; one appears under the name Astarte, the other, without form or presence, simply as A Voice.

The following story is told of the tragic adventure which was his experience with the first. As a young, daring and highly attractive youth he won the love of a Florentine lady; her husband discovered it and murdered her. But the murderer was found dead that same night in the street, and there was nothing to throw suspicion upon a single soul. Lord Byron left Florence, but these apparitions haunted him throughout his whole life.

This romantic event appears in his poems in countless allusions, as for example where he, probably brooding over his own tragedy, applies the sad story of the king of Sparta to his own case. The story is as follows: Pausanias, the Lacedæmonian general, having won fame in the important victory at Platæa, later through arrogance, stubbornness, and cruel treatment, loses the affection of the Greeks, and, on account of a secret understanding with the enemy, loses also the confidence of his countrymen. He thus brings blood-guiltiness upon his head, which pursues him to a miserable end. For while in command of the fleet of the Greek allies in the Black Sea, he falls violently in love with a girl of Byzantium. After a long struggle he wins her from her parents; she is to be brought to him in the night. Filled with shame, she requests the servants to put out the light; this is done, but groping about in the room, she knocks over the lamp-stand. Pausanias awakes suddenly from sleep, suspects murder, seizes his sword and kills his beloved. The horrible vision of this

scene never leaves him afterwards, its shadow pursues him unceasingly, so that he appeals in vain to the gods and to necromancers for aid and absolution.

What a sick heart the poet must have who would seek out such a story from the ancient world, appropriate it to himself, and burden himself with its tragic image! This will explain the following monologue, so laden with gloom and the despair of life; we recommend it to all lovers of declamation for serious practice. Hamlet's monologue is here intensified. It will take considerable art especially to pick out the interpolations and yet keep the connection and the flow and smoothness of the whole. Besides it will be discovered that a certain vehement, even eccentric, expression is needed in order to do justice to the intention of the poet.[1]

[1] The quotation which follows here, translated by Goethe into German, is Manfred's speech at the end of act 2, scene 2, beginning:

> "We are the fools of Time and Terror! Days
> Steal on us, and steal from us; yet we live,
> Loathing our life, and dreading still to die."

BYRON'S *DON JUAN*[1]

(1821)

In hesitating some time ago to insert a passage from [Manzoni's] *Count Carmagnola*, a piece which is perhaps translatable, and in the present instance making the daring attempt to take up and discuss the untranslatable *Don Juan*, it may seem as if we are guilty of an inconsistency. We shall therefore point out the difference between the two cases. Manzoni is as yet but little known among us, and it is better that people should learn to know his merits first in their complete fullness, as they are presented only in the original; after that, a translation by one of our young poets would be decidedly in order. With Lord Byron's talent, on the other hand, we are sufficiently acquainted, and can neither help nor injure him by translation, for the originals are in the hands of all cultivated people.

Yet such an attempt, even if it were attempting the impossible, will always have a certain value. For if a false reflection does not exactly give back the original picture to us, yet it makes us attentive at least to the mirror itself and to its more or less perceptible defects.

Don Juan is a work of infinite genius, misanthropical with the bitterest inhumanity, yet sympathetic with the deepest intensity of tender feeling. And

[1] This paper is preceded by a translation into German verse of the first five stanzas of *Don Juan*.

since we now know the author and esteem him, and do not wish him to be otherwise than he is, we enjoy thankfully what he dares with overgreat independence, indeed insolence, to bring before us. The technical treatment of the verse is quite in accord with the singular, reckless, unsparing content. The poet spares his language as little as he does his men, and as we examine it more closely we discover indeed that English poetry has a cultivated comic language which we Germans wholly lack.

The comic in German lies preëminently in the idea, less in the treatment or style. We admire Lichtenberg's abounding wealth; he has at his command a whole world of knowledge and relations to mix like a pack of cards and deal them out roguishly at pleasure. With Blumauer too, whose compositions in verse certainly possess the comic spirit, it is especially the sharp contrast between old and new, aristocrats and common people, the noble and the mean, that delights us. If we examine further we find that the German, in order to be amusing, steps back several centuries and has the luck to be peculiarly ingenuous and engaging only in doggerel rhyme.

In translating *Don Juan* there are many useful things to be learned from the Englishman. There is only one joke which we cannot imitate from him,—one that gets its effect by a singular and dubious accent in words which look quite differently on paper. The English linguist may judge how far the poet in this case has wantonly exceeded the proper limits.

It is only by chance that the verses inserted here happened to be translated, and they are now published not as a pattern but for their suggestiveness. All

our talented translators ought to try their skill at least partly upon them; they will have to permit assonances and imperfect rhymes and who knows what besides. A certain laconic treatment will also be necessary, in order to give the full quality and significance of this audacious mischievousness. Only when something has been accomplished along these lines, can we discuss the subject further.

Possibly we may be reproached for spreading in translation such writings as these through Germany, thus making an honest, peaceful, decorous nation acquainted with the most immoral works that the art of poety ever produced. But according to our way of thinking, these attempts at translation should not be intended for the press, but may serve as excellent practice for talented brains. Our poets may then discreetly apply and cultivate what they acquire in this way, for the pleasure and delight of their countrymen. No particular injury to morality is to be feared from the publication of such poems, since poets and authors would have to cast aside all restraint to be more corrupting than the papers of the present day.

CALDERON'S *DAUGHTER OF THE AIR*

(1822)

"De nugis hominum seria veritas
Uno volvitur assere."

CERTAINLY if any course of human follies, presented in lofty style, is to be put upon the stage, then this drama should carry off the prize.

We often allow ourselves to be charmed by the merits of a work of art, to the extent that the last good thing which has come before us we consider and discuss as the greatest we have ever seen. Still this does no harm, for we study such a work then *con amore* and all the more closely, and seek to discover its merits, in order that our judgment may be justified. For this reason I do not hesitate to acknowledge that in the *Daughter of the Air* I admire more than ever Calderon's great talent, his lofty genius and clear insight. We should not fail to recognize that the subject is superior to his other plays, in that the story is based on motives purely human, and there is no more of the supernatural element than is necessary for the extraordinary and the exceptional in human affairs to develop and proceed in natural fashion. Only the beginning and the end are marvelous; everything else proceeds in a natural course.

What there is to say of this play is true of all the plays by this poet. He gives us in no way a real view of nature; he is rather theatrical throughout, even

stagey. Of what we call illusion, especially such as touches the feelings, we find not a trace. The design is clear to one's mind, the scenes follow of necessity, in a kind of ballet-order, pleasing and artistic in its way, and suggest the technique of our latest comic opera. The inner leading motives are always the same,—conflict of duty, passion, conditions derived from the antithesis of the characters and the existing relations.

The main action proceeds in a poetic and dignified manner; the minor scenes, which have an elegant movement, in the style of the minuet, are rhetorical, dialectical, sophisticated. All the types of humanity are exhausted; there is not missing even the fool, whose simple mind makes havoc of deception whenever a pretense is made of sympathy and kindness.

Now we must admit on reflection that human situations and emotions cannot be put on the stage in their primitive realism, but must be worked up, touched up, idealized. And thus we find them in this case, too; the poet however stands on the threshold of over-refinement, he gives us a quintessence of humanity.

Shakespeare on the contrary gives us the rich ripe grape from the vine. According to our taste we can enjoy the single berries, press them out and taste or sip the juice or the fermented wine—however we treat them we are refreshed. With Calderon, on the other hand, nothing is left to the choice or taste of the spectator; we receive from him the spirits already drawn off and distilled, seasoned with many spices, or flavored with sweets; we must accept the beverage as it is, as a delicious and palatable stimulant, or else refuse it.

But the reason for our giving the *Daughter of the Air* so high a place has already been suggested; it is fa-

vored by its excellent subject-matter. For we object to seeing a noble and free man, as in several of Calderon's plays, indulging in dark error and lending his reason to indiscretions and folly; here we have a quarrel with the poet himself, since his material offends us, whereas his manner charms. This is the case in *The Devotion of the Cross* and in *Daybreak in Copacabana.*

In this connection we may say in print what we have often expressed privately, that we must regard it as one of the greatest advantages of life that Shakespeare enjoyed, that he was born and brought up as a Protestant. He appears always as a human being, with a complete faith and confidence in human values and affairs: error and superstition he feels to be beneath him, and only toys with them, compelling the supernatural to serve his purposes. Tragic ghosts, droll goblins he summons to his ends, in which everything is clarified and cleansed of superstition, so that the poet never feels the dilemma of being compelled to deify the absurd, the saddest downfall which mankind, conscious of possessing reason, can experience.

Returning to the *Daughter of the Air,* this question suggests itself: If we are now enabled to transport ourselves to so remote an atmosphere, without knowing the locality or understanding the language, to enter familiarly into a foreign literature without previous historical research, and to bring home to ourselves in one example the quality and flavor of a certain age, the mind and genius of a people—to whom do we owe thanks for all this? Evidently to the translator, who all his life and with laborious industry has thus utilized his talent to our benefit. Our warmest thanks, therefore, we present to Dr. Gries; he has given us a gift

whose value is overwhelming, a gift in considering which we gladly refrain from all comparisons, because it delights us by its clearness, wins us by its charm, and by the complete harmony of all its parts convinces us that nothing in it could or should have been different.

Such excellence older readers are likely to prize more highly, for they like to enjoy in comfort a perfectly adequate presentation; younger men, on the contrary, actively engaged in work, coöperating and struggling, do not always acknowledge merit which they themselves hope to emulate.

All honor then to the translator, who concentrated his energies on a single point, and went ahead in a *single* direction, so that we could enjoy in a *thousand* different ways!

MOLIÈRE'S *MISANTHROPE*

(1828)

Histoire de la Vie et des Ouvrages de Molière, par J. Taschereau. Paris, 1828.

This work deserves to be read carefully by all true lovers of literature, because it gives us new insight into the qualities and individuality of a great man. It will also be welcome to his devoted admirers, although they hardly need this in order to treasure him highly; to the attentive reader he has revealed himself sufficiently in his works.

Examine the *Misanthrope* carefully and ask yourself whether a poet has ever represented his inner spirit more completely or more admirably. We can well call the content and treatment of this play "tragic." Such an impression at least it has always left with us, because that mood is brought before our mind's eye which often in itself brings us to despair, and seems as if it would make the world unbearable.

Here is represented the type of man who despite great cultivation has yet remained natural, and who with himself, as well as others, would like only too well to express himself with complete truth and sincerity. But we see him in conflict with the social world, where one cannot move without dissimulation and shallowness.

In contrast to such a type Timon is merely a comic character. I wish that a talented poet would depict such a visionary who was always deceiving himself as to the world, and then was greatly put out with it, as if it had deceived him.

OLD GERMAN FOLKSONGS

(1806)

Des Knaben Wunderhorn. Old German Songs, edited by Achim von Arnim and Klemens Brentano. Heidelberg, 1806.

We are decidedly of the opinion that for the present criticism should not concern itself with this collection. The editors have collected and arranged this volume with such love and diligence, such good taste and delicacy of feeling, that their countrymen should first of all show their gratitude for this loving care by their good-will, their interest, and their sympathetic appreciation. This little book ought to be found in every home in which lively and healthy people dwell,—at the window, under the mirror, or wherever else songbooks and cookbooks are usually found, so that it may be opened in any happy or unhappy mood, and one may always find something which strikes a similar or a new chord, even though one must perhaps turn over a few pages.

But the most fitting place for this volume would be upon the piano of a lover or a master of music, so that full justice might be done the songs by setting them to old familiar tunes, or suitable tunes might be adapted to them, or, God willing, new and striking melodies might be composed through their inspiration.

If these songs were then borne from ear to ear, from

mouth to mouth, clothed in their own melodious harmony, if they gradually returned regenerated and enhanced in beauty to the people from whom they, so to speak, have in part sprung, then we might truly say that the little book had fulfilled its mission, and could now be lost again in its written or printed form, because it had become part and parcel of the life and culture of the nation.

But since in our modern times, especially in Germany, nothing seems to exist or to have any effect unless it is written about again and again, adjudged and made a bone of contention, a few remarks may not improperly be introduced here about this collection,—a few observations which may not enhance our enjoyment of the book, but at least will not impair or destroy it.

What may at the outset be said unreservedly in praise of the collection is that it is thoroughly varied and characteristic. It contains more than two hundred poems of the last three centuries, all of them differing so much from one another in sense, conception, sound, and manner that the same criticism cannot apply to any two of them. We shall therefore assume the agreeable task of characterizing [some of] them in order as the inspiration of the moment may prompt us:

The Wunderhorn. Fairy-like, child-like, pleasing.
The Sultan's Little Daughter. Tender Christian feeling, charming.
Tell and His Child. Honest and solid.
Grandmother Snake-cook. Deep, enigmatic, dramatic, admirably handled.
Isaiah's Face. Barbaric grandeur.
Fire Incantation. Appropriate and true to the spirit of the brigand.
Poor Schwartenhals. Roguish, whimsical, jolly.
Death and the Maiden. After the manner of the Dance of Death; like a wood-cut; admirable.

Nocturnal Musicians. Droll, extravagant, inimitable.

The Stubborn Bride. Humorous, somewhat grotesque.

Cloister-shy. Capriciously confused, yet to the purpose.

The Braggart Knight. Very good in the realistic-romantic manner.

The Black-brown Witch. Rather confused in transmission, but the theme of inestimable value.

Love Without Caste. Romantic twilight.

The Hospitality of Winter. Written with a great deal of elegance.

The High-born Maiden. Christian pedantry, but not wholly unpoetical.

Love Spins no Silk. Charmingly confused and therefore rousing the imagination.

The Faith of an Hussar. Swiftness and lightness expressed in a wonderful way.

The Ratcatcher of Hameln. Tends toward the manner of the ballad-monger, but not coarse.

Tuck Your Dress, Gretlein. After the manner of vagabond poets; unexpectedly epigrammatic.

The Song of the Ring. Romantic tenderness.

The Knight and the Maiden. Romantic twilight; powerful.

Harvest Song. A Catholic funeral hymn; good enough to be Protestant!

A Surfeit of Learning. A gallant piece; but the pedant cannot get rid of his learning.

The Fight at Murten. Realistic, probably modernized.

The Haste of Time in God. Christian, somewhat too historical, but quite suited to its subject, and very good.

Reveille. Priceless for any one who has the imagination to understand it.

Drought. Thought, feeling, presentation everywhere right.

The Drummer Boy. Lively presentation of a distressing incident. A poem which the discriminating will find it difficult to match.

Should and Must. Perfect in plan, although here in a dismembered and curiously restored condition.

A Friendly Service. German romanticism, pious and pleasing.

Cradle Song. Rhyming nonsense, perfectly suited to put one to sleep.

Miller's Farewell. To one who can grasp the situation, a priceless thing; but the first stanza requires an emendation.

Abbot Neidhard and His Monks. A prank of Till Eulenspiegel of the very best sort, and very well told.

The Horrible Marriage. An extraordinary case; in the ballad-monger's manner, but admirably handled.

The Excellent Comrade. Nonsense; but happy the man who can sing it agreeably!

Unrequited Love. Very good, but tending toward a rather Philistine prose.

The Little Tree. Full of longing and playfulness, yet full of fervor.

Mésalliance. Excellent enigmatic fable, but a clearer treatment might have been more pleasing to the reader.

With these impromptu characterizations—for how could they be other than impromptu?—we do not intend to anticipate the judgment of any readers of the book, and least of all those readers who by their own lyric enjoyment and the appreciation of a sympathetic heart can get more from the poems themselves than any brief characterizations like ours can ever give them. We should like, however, in conclusion to say something about the value of the collection as a whole.

We have been accustomed for years to give the name of "folksongs" to this species of poetry, not because it is really composed by the people or for the people, but because it embraces in itself something so vigorous and wholesome that the healthy stock of the nation understands it, remembers it, appropriates it, and at times propagates it. Poetry of this kind is as true poetry as can possibly exist. It has an incredible charm even for us who stand on a higher plane of culture, just as the sight of young people and the memory of one's own youth have for old age. Art in them is in conflict with nature; and it is because of their gradual development, their mutual influence, and their striving for form that these songs seem to seek a further perfection when they have already reached their goal. True poetic genius, wherever it appears, is perfect in itself: no matter what imperfections of language, of external technique, or anything else, stand in its way, it possesses the higher inner form which ultimately has everything at its command, and often in an obscure

and imperfect medium produces a more striking effect than it can later produce in a more perfect medium. The vivid poetic perception of a limited state or condition gives to what is purely individual a universal significance, finite to be sure, but after all limitless and unrestricted, so that within a small compass we fancy we see the whole world. The promptings of a profound intuition urge the poet to a significant brevity; and what would seem in prose unpardonably topsy-turvy is to the true poetic sense a necessity and a virtue; even a solecism, if it appeals seriously to our whole imagination, stimulates it to a surprisingly high degree of enjoyment.

In characterizing the individual poems we avoided the kind of formal classification which may more readily be made in the future when several authentic and typical examples of every kind have been collected. But we cannot conceal our own preference for those songs in which lyric, dramatic, and epic treatment is interwoven in such a way that a problem, at first shrouded in mystery, is finally solved skilfully, or even, if you will, epigrammatically. The well-known ballad, "Why dois your brand sae drop wi' bluid, Edward, Edward?" is, especially in the original, the most perfect example of this species of poetry.

We hope that the editors will be encouraged to publish in the near future another volume of poems from the rich store collected by them as well as from those already printed. We trust that when they do this they will guard themselves carefully against the singsong of the Minnesingers, the blatant coarseness and the platitudes of the Mastersingers, as well as against

everything monkish and pedantic. If they should collect a second volume of these German songs, they might also be asked to select songs of the same kind from foreign nations and to give them in the original and in translations that are either already extant or may be made by them for this special purpose. The most of these, to be sure, will be from the English, fewer from the French, some of a different type from the Spanish, and almost none from the Italian.

If from the outset we have doubted the competence of criticism, even in its highest sense, to judge this work, we have all the more reason to ignore that kind of research which attempts to separate the songs that are genuine from those that have been more or less restored. The editors, so far as it is possible in these later times, have caught the spirit of their task, and we ought to be grateful to them even for those poems which have been oddly restored or made up of heterogeneous parts or are absolutely spurious. Who does not know what a song has to undergo when it has been for some time in the mouth of the people, and not merely uneducated people either? Why should he who finally writes it down and inserts it in a collection with other poems not have a certain personal right to it? We do not possess any poetic or sacred book of earlier times which has not depended for its final form on the skill or whim of him who first wrote it down or some later copyist.

If we accept the printed collection lying before us from this point of view, and with a grateful and kindly spirit, we may charge the editors all the more earnestly to keep their poetic archives pure, lofty, and in good order. It serves no purpose to print everything;

but they will place the whole nation in their debt if they contribute toward that thorough, faithful, and intelligent history of our poetry and our poetic culture which from now on must be the ultimate goal of scholars.

FOLKSONGS AGAIN COMMENDED

(1823)

My old love for original folksongs has not lessened, but has rather been increased by receiving valuable communications from many quarters.

In particular, I have received from the East, some separately, and some in collections, such songs of many different peoples; they extend from Olympus to the Baltic Sea, and from that line towards the north-east.

My hesitation in publishing any of them is due partly to the fact that many varied interests have drawn me here and there and so prevented me, but also more particularly to the following circumstance.

All true national poems have a small circle of ideas, to which they are always limited, and in which they revolve. For that reason they become monotonous in mass, because they express one and the same limited situation.

Examine the six modern Greek songs inserted above; every one will admire the powerful contrast between the virile freedom of spirit in the wilderness and a government, orderly indeed, but still barbaric and of insufficient power. A dozen or more would be sufficient to exhibit this refractory character in them, and show us repetitions such as we find in our own folksongs, where we often come upon more or less happy va-

riations of the same theme, as well as mixed and heterogeneous fragments.

It is remarkable, nevertheless, how much the individual peoples mentioned above differ among themselves in their songs; this characteristic we shall not discuss abstractly, but will rather develop by means of examples from time to time in the ensuing numbers.

Since contributions for this purpose will be highly welcome from all quarters, we request the friend who showed us at Wiesbaden in the summer of 1815 some Greek songs in the original and in a very happy translation, promising to send us soon a copy which never however appeared, to get in touch with us again and cooperate with us in this praiseworthy undertaking.

LAURENCE STERNE

(1827)

In the swift progress of literary, as of human, culture it happens commonly that we forget the person to whom we owe the first stimulus, the original influence. What is, and what flourishes here and now, we believe had to be so and had to happen so. But in this we are wrong, for we lose sight of those who guided us to the right path. From this point of view I call attention to a man who first gave the stimulus to the great epoch in the second half of the last century, an epoch of clearer human knowledge, nobler toleration, gentler humanity.

Of this man, to whom I owe so much, I am often reminded, especially when the talk is of truth and error, which fluctuate here and there among mankind. A third word may be added of gentler meaning, that is, "singularity" (*Eigenheit*), for there are certain human phenomena which can be best expressed by this term. Viewed externally they are erroneous, but from within full of truth, and rightly considered, of the highest psychological importance. They are those qualities which constitute the individual; the universal is thereby specified, and in the most peculiar of them there always shines some intelligence, reason, and good-will which charms us and fetters us. From this standpoint, "Yorick" Sterne, revealing in the tenderest way the human in men, has called these "singularities," in so far as they express themselves in action, "ruling

passions." For certainly they are what drive men in a certain direction, push them along on a consistent track, and without requiring reflection, conviction, purpose or strength of will, keep them continually in life and motion. It is immediately apparent how closely related habit is to them; for it promotes that convenience in which our idiosyncrasies love to saunter undisturbed.

THE ENGLISH REVIEWERS

(1821)

English critics, as we have come to know them from their various Reviews, deserve a great deal of respect. Their acquaintance not only with their own literature, but also with that of other countries, is most gratifying; the seriousness and the thoroughness with which they go to work arouse our admiration, and we are glad to confess that much may be learned from them. Moreover, we find ourselves very favorably impressed by the attitude these men take toward their calling as critics and the respect which they have for the intelligence of the public,—a public, to be sure, which is very attentive to all things written and spoken, but is probably hard to satisfy, and ever disposed to contradict and argue.

No matter how thorough and comprehensive the presentation of a case by an attorney before a body of judges or by a speaker before a provincial diet may be, some opponent will very soon come to the fore with forcible arguments; the attentive and critical hearers will themselves be divided, and many an important matter is often decided by a very small majority.

Such a spirit of opposition, even though passive, we occasionally assume toward critics, both at home and abroad, whose knowledge of facts we by no means deny

and whose premises we often grant, but whose conclusions nevertheless we do not share.

Still we must be especially forbearing to the English when they appear harsh and unjust toward foreign productions; for those who count Shakespeare among their forebears may well allow themselves to be carried away by their pride of ancestry.

GERMAN LITERATURE IN GOETHE'S YOUTH

(1811-14)

So much has been written about the condition of German literature at that time,[1] and to such good purpose, that every one who takes any interest in it can obtain full information; the opinions with regard to it, too, are fairly unanimous; so that anything I say about it here, in my fragmentary and desultory fashion, is not so much an analysis of its characteristics as of its relation to me. I will therefore first speak of those branches which especially react upon the public, those two hereditary foes of all easy-going life, and of all cheerful, self-sufficient, living poetry:—I mean, satire and criticism.

In quiet times every one desires to live after his own fashion; the citizen wishes to carry on his trade or his business, and then enjoy himself; so, too, the author likes to produce something, see his work published, and, in the consciousness of having done something good and useful, looks, if not for remuneration, at any rate for praise. From this state of tranquillity the citizen is roused by the satirist, the author by the critic, and so it comes that peaceful society is rudely disturbed.

The literary epoch in which I was born developed out of the preceding one by opposition. Germany, so long inundated by foreign people, pervaded by other nations, employing foreign languages in learned and diplomatic

[1] About 1765-68.

transactions, could not possibly cultivate her own. Together with so many new ideas, innumerable strange words were obtruded necessarily and unnecessarily upon her, and even for objects already known people were induced to make use of foreign expressions and turns of language. The Germans, brutalized by nearly two centuries of misery and confusion, took lessons from the French in manners and from the Latins in the art of expression. This art ought to have been cultivated in German, since the use of French and Latin idioms, and their partial translation into German, made both their social and business style ridiculous. Besides this, they recklessly adopted figures of speech belonging to the southern languages, and employed them most extravagantly. In the same way the stately ceremoniousness of prince-like Roman citizens had been transferred to the educated circles in German provincial towns. As a result, they nowhere felt themselves at home, least of all in their own houses.

But in this epoch works of genius had already appeared, and the German independence of mind and enjoyment of life began to assert themselves. This cheerful spirit, combined with an honest sincerity, led to the demand for purity and naturalness in writing, without the intermixture of foreign words, and in accordance with the dictates of plain common sense. By these praiseworthy endeavors, however, the flood-gates were thrown open to a prolix national insipidity, nay, the dam was broken down, and an inundation was bound to follow. However, a stiff pedantry continued for some time to hold sway in the four learned professions, and eventually, at a much later date, fled for refuge first to one and then to another.

Men of parts, children of nature looking freely about them, had therefore two objects on which they could exercise their faculties, against which they could direct their energies, and, as the matter was of no great importance, vent their mischievousness; these were, on the one hand, a language disfigured by foreign words, forms, and turns of speech; and on the other, the worthlessness of such writings as had been careful to avoid those faults; but it never occurred to any one that each evil was being combated by fostering the other.

Liscow, a daring young man, first ventured to attack by name a shallow, silly writer, whose foolish behavior soon gave him an opportunity for yet more drastic treatment. He then sought other subjects, invariably directing his satire against particular objects and persons, whom he despised and sought to render despicable; indeed, he pursued them with passionate hatred. But his career was short; for he died early, and was remembered only as a restless, irregular youth. The talent and character shown in what he did, in spite of the smallness of his production, may well have seemed valuable to his countrymen: for the Germans have always shown a peculiar piety towards the promise of genius prematurely cut off. Suffice it to say that in our early youth Liscow was praised and commended to us as an excellent satirist, who might justly claim preference even before the universally beloved Rabener. But we did not gain much from him; for the only thing we discovered from his works was that he considered the absurd absurd, and this seemed to us a matter of course.

Rabener, well educated, grown up under good school discipline, of a cheerful and by no means passionate or malicious disposition, turned to general satire. His

censure of so-called vices and follies is the outcome of clear-sighted and unimpassioned common sense, and of a definite moral conception as to what the world ought to be. His denunciation of faults and failings is harmless and cheerful; and in order to excuse even the slight daring of his writings, he assumes that the attempt to improve fools by ridicule is not in vain.

Rabener's personal character was such as we do not often meet. A thorough and strict man of business, he did his duty, and so gained the good opinion of his fellow-townsmen and the confidence of his superiors; at the same time, by way of relaxation, he indulged in a genial contempt for all that immediately surrounded him. Learned pedants, vain youngsters, every sort of narrowness and conceit, he made fun of rather than satirized, and even his satire expressed no scorn. Just in the same way he jested about his own condition, his unhappiness, his life, and his death.

There is little of the æsthetic in the manner in which this writer treats his subjects. In external form he is indeed varied enough, but throughout he makes too much use of direct irony, that is, in praising the blameworthy and blaming the praiseworthy, whereas this rhetorical device should be adopted extremely sparingly; for, in the long run, it becomes annoying to the clear-sighted, perplexes the foolish, but appeals, it is true, to the great majority, who without special intellectual effort imagine themselves cleverer than other people. But all that he presents to us, whatever its form, bears witness to his rectitude, cheerfulness, and equanimity, so that we are always favorably impressed. The unbounded admiration of his own times was a consequence of these moral excellencies.

It was natural that people should try to discover originals for his general descriptions and should succeed; and consequently he was attacked on this score by certain individuals: his over-long apologies denying that his satire was personal, prove the annoyance to which he was subjected. Some of his letters do honor to him both as a man and an author. The confidential epistle in which he describes the siege of Dresden and the loss of his house, his effects, his writings, and his wigs, without having his equanimity in the least shaken or his cheerfulness clouded, is most estimable, although his contemporaries and fellow-citizens could not forgive him his happy temperament. The letter in which he speaks of the decay of his strength and of his approaching death is in the highest degree worthy of respect, and Rabener deserves to be honored as a saint by all happy sensible people, who cheerfully accept their earthly lot.

I tear myself away from him reluctantly, and merely add this remark: his satire refers throughout to the middle classes; he lets us see here and there that he is also acquainted with the upper classes, but does not hold it advisable to discuss them. It may be said that he had no successor; it would be impossible to point to any one at all equal, or even similar to him.

Let us turn to criticism; and first of all to the theoretic attempts. It is not going too far to say that idealism had at that time fled from the world to religion; it was hardly discoverable even in ethics; of a supreme principle in art no one had a notion. They put Gottsched's *Critical Art of Poetry* into our hands; it was useful and instructive enough, for it gave us historical information about the various kinds of

poetry, as well as about rhythm and its different movements; poetic genius was taken for granted! But besides this the poet was to have education, and even learning, he should possess taste, and other things of the same nature. Finally, we were referred to Horace's *Art of Poetry;* we gazed at single golden maxims of this invaluable work with veneration, but did not know in the least what to do with it as a whole, or how to use it.

The Swiss came to the front as Gottsched's antagonists; hence they must intend to do something different, to accomplish something better: accordingly we heard that they were, in fact, superior. Breitinger's *Critical Art of Poetry* was now studied. Here we entered a wider field, or, properly speaking, only a greater labyrinth, which was the more wearisome, as an able man in whom we had confidence drove us about in it. Let a brief review justify these words.

As yet no one had been able to discover the essential principle of poetry; it was too spiritual and too evanescent. Painting, an art which one could keep within sight, and follow step by step with the external senses, seemed more adapted to such an end; the English and French had already theorized about the arts of painting and sculpture, and it was thought possible to explain the nature of poetry by drawing a comparison from these arts. Painting presented images to the eyes, poetry to the imagination; poetical images, therefore, were the first thing to be taken into consideration. Similes came first, then descriptions and whatever it was possible to represent to the external senses came under discussion.

Images, then! But whence should these images be

taken except from nature? The painter obviously imitated nature; why not the poet also? But nature, just as she is, cannot be imitated: she contains so much that is insignificant and unsuitable, that a selection must be made; but what determines the choice? what is important must be selected; but what is important?

The answer to this question the Swiss probably took a long time to consider: for they arrived at an idea which is indeed strange, but pretty, even amusing; for they said what is new is always most important: and after they had considered this for a while, they discovered that the marvelous is always newer than anything else.

Apparently they now had the essentials of poetry before them, but it had further to be taken into consideration that the marvelous may be barren and without human interest. This human interest which is indispensable must be moral, and would then obviously tend to the improvement of man; hence that poem would fulfil its ultimate aim which in addition to its merits possessed utility. It was the fulfilment of all these demands which constituted the test they wished to apply to the various kinds of poetry, and that species which imitated nature, and furthermore was marvelous, and at the same time moral in purpose and effect, they placed first and highest. And after much deliberation this great preëminence was finally ascribed, with the utmost conviction, to Æsop's fables!

Strange as such a deduction may now appear, it had the most decided influence on the best minds. That Gellert and subsequently Lichtwer devoted themselves to this department of literature, that even Lessing at-

tempted to do work in it, that so many others applied their talents to it, speaks for the faith they put in this species of poetry. Theory and practice always act upon each other; one can see from men's works what opinions they hold; and, from their opinions, it is possible to predict what they will do.

Yet we must not dismiss our Swiss theory without doing it justice. Bodmer, with all the pains he took, remained in theory and practice a child all his life. Breitinger was an able, learned, sagacious man, who, after making a careful survey, recognized all the requirements to be fulfilled by a poem; in fact, it can be shown that he was dimly conscious of the deficiencies of his method. Noteworthy, for instance, is his query, whether a certain descriptive poem by König, on the *Review Camp of Augustus the Second,* is properly speaking a poem; and the answer to it displays good sense. But it may serve for his complete justification that, after starting on a wrong track and nearly completing his circle, he yet discovers the main issue, and at the end of his book, as a kind of supplement, feels it incumbent on him to urge the representation of manners, character, passions, in short the inner man—which surely constitutes the chief theme of poetry.

It may well be imagined into what perplexity young minds were thrown by such maxims torn from their contexts, half-understood laws, and random dogmas. We clung to examples, and there, too, were no better off: the foreign as well as the classical ones were too remote from us; behind the best native ones always lurked a distinct individuality, the good points of which we could not arrogate to ourselves, and into the faults

of which we could not but be afraid of falling. For any one conscious of productive power it was a desperate condition.

When one considers carefully what was wanting in German poetry, it was a significant theme, especially of national import; there was never any lack of gifted writers. It is only necessary to mention Günther, who may be called a poet in the full sense of the word. A decided genius, endowed with sensuousness, imagination, memory, the gifts of conception and representation, productive in the highest degree, possessing rhythmic fluency, ingenious, witty, and at the same time well-informed;—he possessed, in short, all the requisites for creating by his poetry a second life out of the actual commonplace life around him. We admire the great facility with which, in his occasional poems, he ennobles all situations by appealing to the emotions, and embellishes them with suitable sentiments, images, and historical and fabulous traditions. The roughness and wildness in them belong to his time, his mode of life, and especially to his character, or, if you will, his want of character. He did not know how to curb himself, and so his life, like his poetry, proved ineffectual.

By his vacillating conduct, Günther had trifled away the good fortune of being appointed at the Court of Augustus the Second, where, with their love of magnificence, they desired to find a laureate who would impart warmth and grace to their festivities, and immortalize a transitory pomp. Von König was more self-controlled and more fortunate; he filled this post with dignity and success.

In all sovereign states the material for poetry begins with the highest social ranks, and the *Review Camp at*

Mühlberg was, perhaps, the first worthy subject of provincial, if not of national importance which presented itself to a poet. Two kings saluting one another in the presence of a great host, their whole court and military state around them, well-appointed troops, a sham-fight, *fêtes* of all kinds,—here was plenty to captivate the senses, and matter enough and to spare for descriptive poetry.

This subject, indeed, suffered from an inner defect, in that it was only pomp and show, from which no real action could result. None except the very highest were involved, and even if this had not been the case, the poet could not render any one conspicuous lest he should offend the others. He had to consult the *Court and State Calendar*, and the delineation of the persons was therefore not particularly exciting; nay, even his contemporaries reproached him with having described the horses better than the men. But should not the fact that he showed his art as soon as a fitting subject presented itself redound to his credit? The main difficulty, too, seems soon to have become apparent to him—for the poem never advanced beyond the first canto.

As a result of discussions, examples, and my own reflection, I came to see that the first step towards escape from the wishy-washy, long-winded, empty epoch could be taken only by definiteness, precision, and brevity. In the style which had hitherto prevailed, it was impossible to distinguish the commonplace from what was better, since a uniform insipidity prevailed on all hands. Authors had already tried to escape from this widespread disease, with more or less success. Haller and Ramler were inclined to compression by nature;

Lessing and Wieland were led to it by reflection. The former became by degrees quite epigrammatic in his poems, terse in *Minna*, laconic in *Emilia Galotti*,—it was not till later that he returned to that serene *naïveté* which becomes him so well in *Nathan*. Wieland, who had been occasionally prolix in *Agathon*, *Don Sylvio*, and the *Comic Tales*, became wonderfully condensed and precise, as well as exceedingly graceful, in *Musarion* and *Idris*. Klopstock, in the first cantos of the *Messiah*, is not without diffuseness; in his *Odes* and other minor poems he appears concise, as also in his tragedies. By his emulation of the ancients, especially Tacitus, he was constantly forced into narrower limits, so that at last he became obscure and unpleasing. Gerstenberg, a rare but eccentric genius, also concentrated his powers; one feels his merit, but on the whole he gives little pleasure. Gleim, by nature diffuse and easy-going, was scarcely once concise in his war-songs. Ramler was properly more of a critic than a poet. He began to collect what the Germans had accomplished in lyric poetry. He discovered that scarcely one poem entirely satisfied him; he was obliged to omit, rearrange, and alter, so that the things might assume some sort of form. By this means he made himself almost as many enemies as there are poets and amateurs, since every one, properly speaking, recognizes himself only in his defects; and the public takes greater interest in a faulty individuality than in what is produced or amended in accordance with a universal law of taste. Rhythm was still in its cradle, and no one knew of a method to shorten its childhood. Poetical prose was gaining ground. Gessner and Klopstock found many imitators; others, again, still put in a plea for metre, and translated this prose

into intelligible rhythms. But even these emended versions gave nobody satisfaction; for they were obliged to omit and add, and the prose original always passed for the better of the two. But in all these attempts, the greater the conciseness aimed at, the more possible is it to criticize them, since whatever is significant when presented in a condensed form, in the end admits of definite comparison. Another result was the simultaneous appearance of a number of truly poetical forms; for while attempting to reproduce solely whatever was essential in any one subject, it was necessary to do justice to every subject chosen for treatment, and hence, though none did it consciously, the modes of representation were multiplied; though some were grotesque enough, and many an experiment proved unsuccessful.

Without question, Wieland possessed the finest natural gifts of all. He had developed early in those ideal regions in which youth loves to linger; but when so-called experience, contact with the world and women, spoilt his delight in those realms, he turned to the actual, and derived pleasure for himself and others from the conflict between the two worlds, where, in light encounters, half in earnest, half in jest, his talent found fullest scope. How many of his brilliant productions appeared during my student days! *Musarion* had the greatest effect upon me, and I can yet remember the place and the very spot where I looked at the first proof-sheet, which Oeser showed me. It was here that I seemed to see antiquity living anew before me. Everything that is plastic in Wieland's genius showed itself here in the highest perfection; and since the Timon-like hero Phanias, after being condemned to unhappy

abstinence, is finally reconciled to his mistress and to the world, we may be content to live through the misanthropic epoch with him. For the rest, we were not sorry to recognize in these works a cheerful aversion to exalted sentiments, which are apt to be wrongly applied to life, and then frequently fall under the suspicion of fanaticism. We pardoned the author for pursuing with ridicule what we held to be true and venerable, the more readily, as he thereby showed that he was unable to disregard it.

What a miserable reception was accorded such efforts by the criticism of the time may be seen from the first volumes of the *Universal German Library*. Honorable mention is made there of the *Comic Tales*, but there is no trace of any insight into the character of the literary species. The reviewer, like every one at that time, had formed his taste on examples. He never takes into consideration that in criticizing such parodistical works, it is necessary first of all to have the noble, beautiful original before one's eyes, in order to see whether the parodist has really discovered in it a weak and comical side, whether he has borrowed anything from it, or whether, under the pretense of imitation, he has given us an excellent invention of his own. Of all this there is not a word, but isolated passages in the poems are praised or blamed. The reviewer, as he himself confesses, has marked so much that pleased him, that he cannot quote it all in print. When they go so far as to greet the exceedingly meritorious translation of Shakespeare with the exclamation: "By rights, a man like Shakespeare should not have been translated at all!" it will be understood, without further remark, how immeasurably the *Universal*

German Library was behindhand in matters of taste, and that young people, animated by true feelings, had to look about them for other guiding stars.

The subject-matter which in this manner more or less determined the form was sought by the Germans in the most varied quarters. They had handled few national subjects, or none at all. Schlegel's *Hermann* only pointed the way. The idyllic tendency had immense vogue. The want of distinctive character in Gessner, with all his gracefulness and childlike sincerity, made every one think himself capable of the like. In the same manner, those poems which were intended to portray a foreign nationality were founded merely on a common humanity, as, for instance, the *Jewish Pastoral Poems*, all those on patriarchal subjects, and any others based on the Old Testament. Bodmer's *Noachide* was a perfect type of the watery deluge that swelled high around the German Parnassus, and abated but slowly. Anacreontic dallyings likewise made it possible for numberless mediocre writers to meander aimlessly in a vague prolixity. The precision of Horace compelled the Germans, though but slowly, to conform to him. Neither did the burlesques, modeled, for the most part, on Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, succeed in inaugurating better times.

Yet I must here mention a delusion, which was taken as seriously as it appears ridiculous on closer inspection. The Germans had now an adequate historical knowledge of all the kinds of poetry in which the various nations had excelled. This assignment of poetry to its respective pigeon-holes—a process in reality fatal to its true spirit—had been accomplished with approximate completeness by Gottsched in his *Critical Art of*

Poetry, and at the same time he had shown that in all the divisions were to be found excellent works by German poets. And so it went on. Every year the collection became more considerable, but every year one work ousted some other from the place in which it had hitherto shone. We now possessed, if not Homers, yet Virgils and Miltons; if not a Pindar, yet a Horace; of Theocrituses there was no lack; and thus they soothed themselves by comparisons from abroad, whilst the mass of poetical works constantly increased, so that at last it was possible to make comparisons at home.

With the cultivation of the German language and style in every department, the power of criticism also increased; but while the reviews then published of works upon religious and ethical as well as medical subjects were admirable, the critiques of poems, and of whatever else relates to *belles lettres*, will be found, if not pitiful, at least very feeble. This holds good of the *Literary Epistles* and the *Universal German Library*, as well as of the *Library of Belles Lettres*, and might easily be verified by notable instances.

However great the confusion of these varied efforts, the only thing to be done by any one who contemplated producing anything original, and was not content to take the words and phrases out of the mouths of his predecessors, was to search unremittingly for some subject-matter for treatment. Here, too, we were greatly misled. People were constantly repeating a saying of Kleist's, who had replied playfully, with humor and truth, to those who took him to task on account of his frequently lonely walks: "that he was not idle at such times—he was hunting for images." This simile was very suitable for a nobleman and soldier, for in it he

contrasted himself with men of his own rank, who never missed an opportunity of going out, with their guns on their shoulders, to shoot hares and partridges. Accordingly we find in Kleist's poems many such individual images, happily seized, although not always happily elaborated, which remind us pleasantly of nature. But now we, too, were admonished quite seriously to go out hunting for images, and in the end to some slight purpose, although Apel's Garden, the Cake Gardens, the Rosental, Gohlis, Raschwitz and Konnewitz, were the oddest ground in which to beat up poetical game. And yet I was often induced from this motive to contrive that my walk should be solitary. But few either beautiful or sublime objects met the eye of the beholder, and in the truly splendid Rosental the gnats in summer made all gentle thoughts impossible, so by dint of unwearied, persevering endeavor, I became extremely attentive to the small life of nature (I should like to use this word after the analogy of "still life"). Since the charming little incidents to be observed within this circle are but unimportant in themselves, I accustomed myself to see in them a significance, tending now towards the symbolical and now towards the allegorical, according as intuition, feeling, or reflection predominated.

Whilst I was playing the part of shepherd on the Pleisse, and was childishly absorbed in such tender subjects, always choosing such only as I could easily recapture and lock in my heart, greater and more important themes had long before been provided for German poets.

It was Frederick the Great and the events of the Seven Years' War which first gave to German literature

a real and noble vitality. All national poetry cannot fail to be insipid, or inevitably becomes so, if it is not based on the man who stands first among men, upon the experiences which come to the nations and their leaders, when both stand together as one man. Kings should be represented in the midst of warfare and danger, for there they are made to appear the highest, just because the fate of the lowest depends upon them and is shared by them. In this way they become far more interesting than the gods themselves, who, when they have decided the destinies of men, do not share them. In this sense every nation that wishes to count for anything ought to possess an epic, though not necessarily in the form of an epic poem.

The war-songs first sung by Gleim deserve their high place in German poetry, because they were the outcome of and contemporary with the events they celebrate; and furthermore, because the felicitous form, suggestive of a combatant's utterance in the thick of the fray, impresses us with its absolute effectiveness.

Ramler sings in different but dignified strains the exploits of his king. All his poems are thoughtful, and fill our minds with great and elevating subjects, and on that account alone possess an indestructible value.

For the significance of the subject treated of is the Alpha and Omega of art. Of course, no one will deny that genius, or cultivated artistic talent, can by its method of treatment make anything out of anything, and render the most refractory subject amenable. But on close inspection the result is rather an artistic feat than a work of art, which latter should be based on a fitting subject, so that in the end the skill, the care,

the diligence of the artist's treatment only brings out the dignity of the subject in greater attractiveness and splendor.

Prussians, and with them Protestant Germany, therefore gained a treasure-trove for their literature, which was lacking to the other party, who have not been able to repair the deficiency by subsequent efforts. In the high idea which they cherished of their King, the Prussian writers first found inspiration, and fostered it all the more zealously because he in whose name they did everything would have nothing whatever to say to them. French civilization had been widely introduced into Prussia at an earlier date by the French colony, and again later by the King's preference for French culture and French financial methods. The effect of this French influence was to rouse the Germans to antagonism and resistance—a result decidedly beneficial in its operation. Equally fortunate for the development of literature was Frederick's antipathy to German. They did everything to attract the King's attention, not indeed to be honored, but only to be noticed by him; yet they did it in German fashion, from inner conviction; they did what they held to be right, and desired and wished that the King should recognize and prize this as right. That did not and could not happen; for how can it be expected that a king, who wishes to live and enjoy himself intellectually, should waste his years waiting to see what he thinks barbarous developed and rendered enjoyable too late? In matters of trade and manufacture, it is true, he pressed upon himself, but especially upon his people, very mediocre substitutes instead of excellent foreign wares; but in this depart-

ment of life everything is perfected more rapidly, and it does not take a man's life-time to bring such things to maturity.

But I must here, first of all, make honorable mention of one work, the most genuine product of the Seven Years' War, altogether North German in its national sentiment; it is the first dramatic work founded upon important events of specific contemporary value, and therefore produced an incalculable effect—*Minna von Barnhelm.* Lessing, who, unlike Klopstock and Gleim, was fond of laying aside his personal dignity, because he was confident that he could resume it at any moment, delighted in a dissipated, worldly life and the society of taverns, as he always needed some strong external excitement to counterbalance his exuberant intellectual activity; and for this reason also he had joined the suite of General Tauentzien. It is easy to see how this drama was generated betwixt war and peace, hatred and affection. It was this production which successfully opened to the literary and middle-class world, in which poetic art had hitherto moved, a view into a higher, more significant world.

The hostile relations in which Prussians and Saxons had stood towards each other during this war, could not be removed by its termination. The Saxon now felt for the first time the whole bitterness of the wounds which the upstart Prussian had inflicted upon him. Political peace could not immediately reëstablish a peace between their hearts. But the establishment of this peace was represented symbolically in Lessing's drama. The grace and amiability of the Saxon ladies conquer the worth, the dignity, and the stubborness of the

Prussians, and, in the principal as well as in the subordinate characters, a happy union of bizarre and contradictory elements is artistically represented.

If I have caused my readers some bewilderment by these cursory and desultory remarks on German literature, I have succeeded in giving them a conception of the chaotic condition of my poor brain at a time when, in the conflict of two epochs so important for the national literature, so much that was new crowded in upon me before I could come to terms with the old, so much that was old still maintained its hold upon me, though I already believed I might with good reason renounce it altogether.

EXTRACTS FROM GOETHE'S CONVERSATIONS WITH ECKERMANN

EXTRACTS FROM THE CONVERSATIONS WITH ECKERMANN

(1822-32)

The Universality of Poetry

Within the last few days I have read many and various things; especially a Chinese novel, which occupies me still, and seems to me very remarkable. The Chinese think, act, and feel almost exactly like ourselves; and we soon find that we are perfectly like them, excepting that all they do is more clear, more pure and decorous than with us.

With them all is orderly, simple, without great passion or poetic flight; and there is a strong resemblance to my *Hermann and Dorothea*, as well as to the English novels of Richardson. They differ from us, however, inasmuch as with them external nature is always associated with human figures. You always hear the goldfish splashing in the pond, the birds are always singing on the bough, the day is always serene and sunny, the night is always clear. There is much talk about the moon, but it does not alter the landscape, its light is conceived to be as bright as day itself; and the interior of the houses is as neat and elegant as their pictures. For instance, "I heard the lovely girls laughing, and when I got a sight of them, they were sitting on cane chairs." There you have, at once, the prettiest situation; for cane chairs are necessarily

associated with the greatest lightness and elegance. Then there is an infinite number of legends which are constantly introduced into the narrative, and are applied almost like proverbs; as, for instance, one of a girl, who was so light and graceful on her feet that she could balance herself on a flower without breaking it; and then another, of a young man so virtuous and brave that in his thirtieth year he had the honor to talk with the Emperor; then there is another of two lovers who showed such great purity during a long acquaintance that when they were on one occasion obliged to pass the night in the same chamber, they occupied the time with conversation, and did not approach one another.

And in the same way, there are innumerable other legends, all turning upon what is moral and proper. It is by this severe moderation in everything that the Chinese Empire has sustained itself for thousands of years, and will endure hereafter.

I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere, and at all times, in hundreds and hundreds of men. One makes it a little better than another, and swims on the surface a little longer than another—that is all. Herr von Matthisson must not think he is the man, nor must I think that I am the man; but each must say to himself that the gift of poetry is by no means so very rare, and that nobody need think very much of himself because he has written a good poem.

But, really, we Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, when we do not look beyond the narrow circle which surrounds us. I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and

advise every one to do the same. National literature is now rather an unmeaning term; the epoch of World Literature is at hand, and every one must strive to hasten its approach. But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to anything in particular, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Servian, or Calderon, or the Nibelungen; but if we really want a pattern, we must always return to the ancient Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically, appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes.

Poetry and Patriotism[1]

To write military songs, and sit in a room! That would have suited me! To have written them in the bivouac, when the horses at the enemy's outposts are heard neighing at night, would have been well enough; however, that was not my life and not my business, but that of Theodor Körner. His war-songs suit him perfectly. But to me, who am not of a warlike nature, and who have no warlike sense, war-songs would have been a mask which would have fitted my face very badly.

I have never affected anything in my poetry. I have never uttered anything which I have not experienced, and which has not urged me to production. I have only composed love-songs when I have loved. How could I write songs of hatred without hating! And, between ourselves, I did not hate the French, although

[1] Goethe had been reproached "for not taking up arms in the German War of Liberation, or at least coöperating as a poet."

I thanked God that we were free from them. How could I, to whom culture and barbarism are alone of importance, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated of the earth, and to which I owe so great a part of my own culture?

Altogether, national hatred is something peculiar. You will always find it strongest and most violent where there is the lowest degree of culture. But there is a degree where it vanishes altogether, and where one stands to a certain extent *above* nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighboring people, as if it had happened to one's own. This degree of culture was conformable to my nature, and I had become strengthened in it long before I had reached my sixtieth year.

It is better for us moderns to say with Napoleon, "Politics are Destiny." But let us beware of saying, with our latest literati, that politics are poetry, or a suitable subject for the poet. The English poet Thomson wrote a very good poem on the Seasons, but a very bad one on Liberty, and that not from want of poetry in the poet, but from want of poetry in the subject.

If a poet would work politically, he must give himself up to a party; and so soon as he does that he is lost as a poet; he must bid farewell to his free spirit, his unbiased view, and draw over his ears the cap of bigotry and blind hatred.

The poet, as a man and citizen, will love his native land; but the native land of his *poetic* powers and poetic action is the good, noble, and beautiful, which is confined to no particular province or country, and which he seizes upon and forms wherever he finds it. Therein

is he like the eagle, who hovers with free gaze over whole countries, and to whom it is of no consequence whether the hare on which he pounces is running in Prussia or in Saxony.

And, then, what is meant by love of one's country? what is meant by patriotic deeds? If the poet has employed a life in battling with pernicious prejudices, in setting aside narrow views, in enlightening the minds, purifying the tastes, ennobling the feelings and thoughts of his countrymen, what better could he have done? how could he have acted more patriotically?

Poetry and History

Manzoni wants nothing except to know what a good poet he is, and what rights belong to him as such. He has too much respect for history, and on this account always adds explanations to his pieces, in which he shows how faithful he has been to detail. Now, though his facts may be historical, his characters are not so, any more than my Thoas and Iphigenia. No poet has ever known the historical characters which he has painted; if he had, he could scarcely have made use of them. The poet must know what effects he wishes to produce, and regulate the nature of his characters accordingly. If I had tried to make Egmont as history represents him, the father of a dozen children, his light-minded proceedings would have appeared very absurd. I needed an Egmont more in harmony with his own actions and my poetic views; and this is, as Clara says, *my* Egmont.

What would be the use of poets, if they only repeated the record of the historian? The poet must go

further, and give us, if possible, something higher and better. All the characters of Sophocles bear something of that great poet's lofty soul; and it is the same with the characters of Shakespeare. This is as it ought to be. Nay, Shakespeare goes farther, and makes his Romans Englishmen; and there, too, he is right; for otherwise his nation would not have understood him.

Here again the Greeks were so great that they regarded fidelity to historic facts less than the treatment of them by the poet. We have a fine example in Philoctetes, which subject has been treated by all three of the great tragic poets, and lastly and best by Sophocles. This poet's excellent play has, fortunately, come down to us entire, while of the Philoctetes of Æschylus and Euripides only fragments have been found, although sufficient to show how they have managed the subject. If time permitted, I would restore these pieces, as I did the Phäeton of Euripides; it would be to me no unpleasant or useless task.

In this subject the problem was very simple, namely, to bring Philoctetes, with his bow, from the island of Lemnos. But the manner of doing this was the business of the poet, and here each could show the power of his invention, and one could excel another. Ulysses must fetch him; but shall he be recognized by Philoctetes or not? and if not, how shall he be disguised? Shall Ulysses go alone, or shall he have companions, and who shall they be? In Æschylus the companion is unknown; in Euripides, it is Diomed; in Sophocles, the son of Achilles. Then, in what situation is Philoctetes to be found? Shall the island be inhabited or not? and, if inhabited, shall any sympathetic soul have taken compas-

sion on him or not? And so with a hundred other things, which are all at the discretion of the poet, and in the selection and omission of which one may show his superiority in wisdom to another. This is the important point, and the poets of to-day should do like the ancients. They should not be always asking whether a subject has been used before, and look to south and north for unheard-of adventures, which are often barbarous enough, and merely make an impression as incidents. But to make something of a simple subject by a masterly treatment requires intellect and great talent, and these we do not find.

Originality

The Germans cannot cease to be Philistines. They are now squabbling about some distichs, which are printed both in Schiller's works and mine, and fancy it is important to ascertain which really belong to Schiller and which to me; as if anything could be gained by such investigation—as if the existence of such things were not enough. Friends like Schiller and myself, intimate for years, with the same interests, in habits of daily intercourse, and under reciprocal obligations, live so completely in one another that it is hardly possible to decide to which of the two the particular thoughts belong.

We have made many distiches together; sometimes I gave the thought, and Schiller made the verse; sometimes the contrary was the case; sometimes he made one line, and I the other. What matters the mine and thine? One must be a thorough Philistine, indeed, to attach the slightest importance to the solution of such questions.

We are indeed born with faculties; but we owe our development to a thousand influences of the great world, from which we appropriate to ourselves what we can, and what is suitable to us. I owe much to the Greeks and French; I am infinitely indebted to Shakespeare, Sterne, and Goldsmith; but in saying this I do not exhaust the sources of my culture; that would be an endless as well as an unnecessary task. We might as well question a strong man about the oxen, sheep, and swine which he has eaten, and which have given him strength. What is important is to have a soul which loves truth, and receives it wherever it finds it.

Besides, the world is now so old, so many eminent men have lived and thought for thousands of years, that there is little new to be discovered or expressed. Even my theory of colors is not entirely new. Plato, Leonardo da Vinci, and many other excellent men, have before me found and expressed the same thing in a detached form: my merit is that I have found it also, that I have said it again, and that I have striven to bring the truth once more into a confused world.

The truth must be repeated over and over again, because error is repeatedly preached among us, not only by individuals, but by the masses. In periodicals and cyclopedias, in schools and universities, everywhere, in fact, error prevails, and is quite easy in the feeling that it has a decided majority on its side.

People are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us, and this goes on to the end. And, after all, what can we call our own except energy, strength, and will? If I could give an account of all

that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in my favor.

However, the time of life in which we are subjected to a new and important personal influence is, by no means, a matter of indifference. That Lessing, Winckelmann, and Kant were older than I, and that the first two acted upon my youth, the latter on my advanced age,—this circumstance was for me very important. Again, that Schiller was so much younger than I, and engaged in his freshest strivings just as I began to be weary of the world—just, too, as the brothers von Humboldt and Schlegel were beginning their career under my eye—was of the greatest importance. I derived from it unspeakable advantages.

What seduces young people is this. We live in a time in which so much culture is diffused that it has communicated itself, as it were, to the atmosphere which a young man breathes. Poetical and philosophic thoughts live and move within him, he has sucked them in with his very breath, but he thinks they are his own property, and utters them as such. But after he has restored to the time what he has received from it, he remains poor. He is like a fountain which plays for a while with the water with which it is supplied, but which ceases to flow as soon as the liquid treasure is exhausted.

The critic of *Le Temps* has not been so wise. He presumes to point out to the poet the way he should go. This is a great fault; for one cannot thus make him better. After all, there is nothing more foolish than to say to a poet: "You should have done this in this way—and that in that." I speak from long ex-

perience. One can never make anything of a poet but what nature has intended him to be. If you force him to be another, you will destroy him. Now, the gentlemen of the *Globe*, as I said before, act very wisely. They print a long list of all the commonplaces which M. Arnault has picked up from every hole and corner; and by doing this they very cleverly point out the rock which the author has to avoid in future. It is almost impossible, in the present day, to find a situation which is thoroughly new. It is merely the manner of looking at it, and the art of treating and representing it, which can be new, and one must be the more cautious of every imitation.

Personality in Art

You have before you the works of very fair talents, who have learned something, and have acquired no little taste and art. Still, something is wanting in all these pictures—the *Manly*. Take notice of this word, and underscore it. The pictures lack a certain urgent power, which in former ages was generally expressed, but in which the present age is deficient, and that with respect not only to painting, but to all the other arts. We have a more weakly race, of which we cannot say whether it is so by its origin, or by a more weakly training and diet.

Personality is everything in art and poetry; nevertheless, there are many weak personages among the modern critics who do not admit this, but look upon a great personality in a work of poetry or art merely as a kind of trifling appendage.

However, to feel and respect a great personality one must be something oneself. All those who denied the

sublime to Euripides were either poor wretches incapable of comprehending such sublimity, or shameless charlatans, who, by their presumption, wished to make more of themselves, and really did make more of themselves than they were.

The Subject-Matter of Poetry

The world is so great and rich, and life so full of variety, that you can never want occasions for poems. But they must all be occasional poems; that is to say, reality must give both impulse and material for their production. A particular case becomes universal and poetic by the very circumstance that it is treated by a poet. All my poems are occasional poems, suggested by real life, and having therein a firm foundation. I attach no value to poems snatched out of the air.

Let no one say that reality wants poetical interest; for in this the poet proves his vocation, that he has the art to win from a common subject an interesting side. Reality must give the motive, the points to be expressed, the kernel, as I may say; but to work out of it a beautiful, animated whole, belongs to the poet. You know Fürnstein, called the Poet of Nature; he has written the prettiest poem possible on the cultivation of hops. I have now proposed to him to make songs for the different crafts of working-men, particularly a weaver's song, and I am sure he will do it well, for he has lived among such people from his youth; he understands the subjects thoroughly, and is therefore master of his material. That is exactly the advantage of small works; you need only choose those subjects of which you are master. With a great poem, this cannot be:

no part can be evaded; all which belongs to the animation of the whole, and is interwoven into the plan, must be represented with precision. In youth, however, the knowledge of things is only one-sided. A great work requires many-sidedness, and on that rock the young author splits.

I especially warn you against great inventions of your own; for then you would try to give a view of things, and for that purpose youth is seldom ripe. Further, character and views detach themselves as sides from the poet's mind, and deprive him of the fullness requisite for future productions. And, finally, how much time is lost in invention, internal arrangement, and combination, for which nobody thanks us, even supposing our work is happily accomplished.

With a *given* material, on the other hand, all goes easier and better. Facts and characters being provided, the poet has only the task of animating the whole. He preserves his own fullness, for he needs to part with but little of himself, and there is much less loss of time and energy, since he has only the trouble of execution. Indeed, I would advise the choice of subjects which have been worked before. How many Iphigenias have been written! yet they are all different, for each writer considers and arranges the subject differently; namely, after his own fashion.

The majority of our young poets have no fault but this, that their subjectivity is not important, and that they cannot find matter in the objective. At best, they only find a material which is similar to themselves, which corresponds to their own subjectivity; but as for tak-

ing the material on its own account, merely because it is poetical, even when it is repugnant to their subjectivity, such a thing is never thought of.

Our German æstheticians are always talking about poetical and unpoetical objects; and, in one respect, they are not quite wrong; yet, at bottom, no real object is unpoetical, if the poet knows how to use it properly.

The Influence of Environment

If a talent is to be speedily and happily developed, the great point is that a great deal of intellect and sound culture should be current in a nation.

We admire the tragedies of the ancient Greeks; but, to take a correct view of the case, we ought rather to admire the period and the nation in which their production was possible than the individual authors; for though these pieces differ a little from each other, and one of these poets appears somewhat greater and more finished than the other, still, taking all things together, only one decided character runs through the whole.

This is the character of grandeur, fitness, soundness, human perfection, elevated wisdom, sublime thought, clear, concrete vision, and whatever other qualities one might enumerate. But when we find all these qualities, not only in the dramatic works that have come down to us, but also in lyrical and epic works, in the philosophers, the orators, and the historians, and in an equally high degree in the works of plastic art that have come down to us, we must feel convinced that such qualities did not merely belong to individuals, but were the current property of the nation and the whole period.

Now, take up Burns. How is he great, except through the circumstance that the old songs of his predecessors lived in the mouth of the people,—that they were, so to speak, sung at his cradle; that, as a boy, he grew up amongst them, and the high excellence of these models so pervaded him that he had therein a living basis on which he could proceed further? Again, why is he great, but from this, that his own songs at once found susceptible ears amongst his compatriots; that, sung by reapers and sheaf-binders, they at once greeted him in the field; and that his boon-companions sang them to welcome him at the alehouse? Something was certainly to be done in this way.

On the other hand, what a pitiful figure is made by us Germans! Of our old songs—no less important than those of Scotland—how many lived among the people in the days of my youth? Herder and his successors first began to collect them and rescue them from oblivion; then they were at least printed in the libraries. Then, more lately, what songs have not Bürger and Voss composed! Who can say that they are more insignificant or less popular than those of the excellent Burns? but which of them so lives among us that it greets us from the mouth of the people?—they are written and printed, and they remain in the libraries, quite in accordance with the general fate of German poets. Of my own songs, how many live? Perhaps one or another of them may be sung by a pretty girl at the piano; but among the people, properly so called, they have no sound. With what sensations must I remember the time when passages from Tasso were sung to me by Italian fishermen!

We Germans are of yesterday. We have indeed been

properly cultivated for a century; but a few centuries more must still elapse before so much mind and elevated culture will become universal amongst our people that they will appreciate beauty like the Greeks, that they will be inspired by a beautiful song, and that it will be said of them " it is long since they were barbarians."

Culture and Morals

The audacity and grandeur of Byron must certainly tend towards Culture. We should take care not to be always looking for it in only what is decidedly pure and moral. Everything that is great promotes cultivation as soon as we are aware of it.

Classic and Romantic

A new expression occurs to me which does not ill define the state of the case. I call the classic *healthy*, the romantic *sickly*. In this sense, the *Nibelungenlied* is as classic as the *Iliad*, for both are vigorous and healthy. Most modern productions are romantic, not because they are new, but because they are weak, morbid, and sickly; and the antique is classic, not because it is old, but because it is strong, fresh, joyous, and healthy. If we distinguish " classic " and " romantic " by these qualities, it will be easy to see our way clearly.

This is a pathological work; a superfluity of sap is bestowed on some parts which do not require it, and drawn out of those which stand in need of it. The subject was good, but the scenes which I expected were not there; while others, which I did not expect, were elaborated with assiduity and love. This is what I call

pathological, or "romantic," if you would rather speak according to our new theory.

The French now begin to think justly of these matters. Both classic and romantic, say they, are equally good. The only point is to use these forms with judgment, and to be capable of excellence. You can be absurd in both, and then one is as worthless as the other. This, I think, is rational enough, and may content us for a while.

The idea of the distinction between classical and romantic poetry, which is now spread over the whole world, and occasions so many quarrels and divisions, came originally from Schiller and myself. I laid down the maxim of objective treatment in poetry, and would allow no other; but Schiller, who worked quite in the subjective way, deemed his own fashion the right one, and to defend himself against me, wrote the treatise upon *Naïve and Sentimental Poetry*. He proved to me that I myself, against my will, was romantic, and that my *Iphigenia*, through the predominance of sentiment, was by no means so classical and so much in the antique spirit as some people supposed.

The Schlegels took up this idea, and carried it further, so that it has now been diffused over the whole world; and every one talks about classicism and romanticism—of which nobody thought fifty years ago.

Taste

This is the way to cultivate what we call taste. Taste is only to be educated by contemplation, not of

the tolerably good, but of the truly excellent. I therefore show you only the best works; and when you are grounded in these, you will have a standard for the rest, which you will know how to value, without overrating them. And I show you the best in each class, that you may perceive that no class is to be despised, but that each gives delight when a man of genius attains its highest point. For instance, this piece, by a French artist, is *galant*, to a degree which you see nowhere else, and is therefore a model in its way.

Style

On the whole, philosophical speculation is injurious to the Germans, as it tends to make their style abstract, difficult, and obscure. The stronger their attachment to certain philosophical schools, the worse they write. Those Germans who, as men of business and actual life, confine themselves to the practical, write the best. Schiller's style is most noble and impressive whenever he leaves off philosophizing, as I observe every day in his highly interesting letters, with which I am now busy.

There are also among the German women talented beings who write a really excellent style, and, indeed, in that respect surpass many of our celebrated male writers.

The English almost always write well, being born orators and practical men, with a tendency to the real.

The French, in their style, remain true to their general character. They are of a social nature, and therefore never forget the public whom they address; they strive to be clear; that they may convince their reader —agreeable, that they may please him.

Altogether, the style of a writer is a faithful representative of his mind; therefore, if any man wishes to write a clear style, let him first be clear in his thoughts; and if any would write in a noble style, let him first possess a noble soul.

Intellect and Imagination

I wonder what the German critics will say [of this poetic inconsistency]. Will they have freedom and boldness enough to get over this? Intellect will stand in the way of the French; they will not consider that the imagination has its own laws, to which the intellect cannot, and should not, penetrate.

If imagination did not originate things which must ever be problems to the intellect, there would be but little for the imagination to do. It is this which separates poetry from prose; and it is in the latter that the intellect always is, and always should be, at home.

Definition of Poetry

What need of much definition? Lively feeling of situations, and power to express them, make the poet.

Definition of Beauty

I cannot help laughing at the æstheticians, who torment themselves in endeavoring, by some abstract words, to reduce to a conception that inexpressible thing to which we give the name of beauty. Beauty is a primeval phenomenon, which itself never makes its appearance, but the reflection of which is visible in a thousand different utterances of the creative mind, and is as various as nature herself.

Architecture and Music

I have found a paper of mine among some others, in which I call architecture "petrified music."[1] Really there is something in this; the tone of mind produced by architecture approaches the effect of music.

Primitive Poetry

From these old-German gloomy times we can obtain as little as from the Servian songs, and similar barbaric popular poetry. We can read it and be interested about it for a while, but merely to cast it aside, and let it lie behind us. Generally speaking, a man is quite sufficiently saddened by his own passions and destiny, and need not make himself more so by the darkness of a barbaric past. He needs enlightening and cheering influences, and should therefore turn to those eras in art and literature, during which remarkable men obtained perfect culture, so that they were satisfied with themselves, and able to impart to others the blessings of their culture.

Weltliteratur

We [Germans] are weakest in the æsthetic department, and may wait long before we meet such a man as Carlyle. It is pleasant to see that intercourse is now so close between the French, English, and Germans, that we shall be able to correct one another. This is the greatest use of a World Literature, which will show itself more and more.

[1] "Architecture is music in space, as it were a frozen music."—Schelling's *Philosophie der Kunst.*

Carlyle has written a life of Schiller, and judged him as it would be difficult for a German to judge him. On the other hand, we are clear about Shakespeare and Byron, and can, perhaps, appreciate their merits better than the English themselves.

French Critics

I am now really curious to know what the gentlemen of the *Globe* will say of this novel. They are clever enough to perceive its excellencies; and the whole tendency of the work is so much grist to the mill of these liberals, although Manzoni has shown himself very moderate. Nevertheless, the French seldom receive a work with such pure kindliness as we; they cannot readily adapt themselves to the author's point of view, but, even in the best, always find something which is not to their mind, and which the author should have done otherwise.

What men these writers in the *Globe* are! One has scarcely a notion how much greater and more remarkable they become every day, and how much, as it were, they are imbued with one spirit. Such a paper would be utterly impossible in Germany. We are mere individuals; harmony and concert are not to be thought of; each has the opinions of his province, his city, and his own idiosyncrasy; and it will be a long while before we have attained an universal culture.

The Construction of a Good Play

When a piece makes a deep impression on us in reading, we think that it will do the same on the stage, and

that such a result can be obtained with little trouble. But this is by no means the case. A piece that is not originally, by the intent and skill of the poet, written for the boards, will not succeed; but whatever is done to it will always remain something unmanageable. What trouble have I taken with my *Goetz von Berlichingen!* Yet it will not quite do as an acting play; it is too long; and I have been forced to divide it into two parts, of which the last is indeed theatrically effective, while the first is to be looked upon as a mere introduction. If the first part were given only once as an introduction, and then the second repeatedly, it might succeed. It is the same with *Wallenstein;* the *Piccolomini* does not bear repetition, but *Wallenstein's Death* is always seen with delight.

The construction of a play must be symbolical; that is to say, each incident must be significant in itself, and lead to another still more important. The *Tartuffe* of Molière is, in this respect, a great example. Only think what an introduction is the first scene! From the very beginning everything is highly significant, and leads us to expect something still more important which is to come. The beginning of Lessing's *Minna von Barnhelm* is also admirable; but that of *Tartuffe* is absolutely unique: it is the greatest and best thing that exists of the kind.

In Calderon you find the same perfect adaptation to the theatre. His pieces are throughout fit for the boards; there is not a touch in them which is not directed towards the required effect. Calderon is a genius who had also the finest understanding.

Shakespeare wrote his plays direct from his own nature. Then, too, his age and the existing arrange-

ments of the stage made no demands upon him; people were forced to put up with whatever he gave them. But if Shakespeare had written for the court of Madrid, or for the theatre of Louis XIV, he would probably have adapted himself to a severer theatrical form. This, however, is by no means to be regretted, for what Shakespeare has lost as a theatrical poet he has gained as a poet in general. Shakespeare is a great psychologist, and we learn from his pieces what really moves the hearts of men.

Dramatic Unities

He [Byron] understood the purpose of this law no better than the rest of the world. Comprehensibility [*das Fassliche*] is the purpose, and the three unities are only so far good as they conduce to this end. If the observance of them hinders the comprehension of a work, it is foolish to treat them as laws, and to try to observe them. Even the Greeks, from whom the rule was taken, did not always follow it. In the *Phaethon* of Euripides, and in other pieces, there is a change of place, and it is obvious that good representation of their subject was with them more important than blind obedience to law, which, in itself, is of no great consequence. The pieces of Shakespeare deviate, as far as possible, from the unities of time and place; but they are comprehensible—nothing more so—and on this account the Greeks would have found no fault in them. The French poets have endeavored to follow most rigidly the laws of the three unities, but they sin against comprehensibility, inasmuch as they solve a dramatic law, not dramatically, but by narration.

The Theatre

Any one who is sufficiently young, and who is not quite spoiled, could not easily find any place that would suit him so well as a theatre. No one asks you any questions: you need not open your mouth unless you choose; on the contrary, you sit quite at your ease like a king, and let everything pass before you, and recreate your mind and senses to your heart's content. There is poetry, there is painting, there are singing and music, there is acting, and what not besides. When all these arts, and the charm of youth and beauty heightened to an important degree, work in concert on the same evening, it is a bouquet to which no other can compare. But even when part is bad and part is good, it is still better than looking out of the window, or playing a game of whist in a close party amid the smoke of cigars.

Acting

It is a great error to think that an indifferent piece may be played by indifferent actors. A second or third rate play can be incredibly improved by the employment of first-rate talents, and be made something really good. But if a second or third rate play be performed by second or third rate actors, no one can wonder if it is utterly ineffective.

Second-rate actors are excellent in great plays. They have the same effect that the figures in half shade have in a picture; they serve admirably to show off more powerfully those which have the full light.

Dramatic Situations

Gozzi maintained that there are only thirty-six tragical situations. Schiller took the greatest pains to find more, but he did not find even so many as Gozzi.

Management of the Theatre

The Grand Duke disclosed to me his opinion that a theatre need not be of architectural magnificence, which could not be contradicted. He further said that it was after all but a house for the purpose of getting money. This view appears at first sight rather material; but rightly considered, it is not without a higher purport. For if a theatre is not only to pay its expenses, but is, besides, to make and save money, everything about it must be excellent. It must have the best management at its head; the actors must be of the best; and good pieces must continually be performed, that the attractive power required to draw a full house every evening may never cease. But that is saying a great deal in a few words—almost what is impossible.

Even Shakespeare and Molière had no other view. Both of them wished, above all things, to make money out of their theatres. In order to attain this, their principal aim, they necessarily strove that everything should be as good as possible, and that, besides good old plays, there should be some worthy novelty to please and attract.

Nothing is more dangerous to the well-being of a theatre than when the director is so placed that a greater or less receipt at the treasury does not affect him personally, and he can live on in careless security, knowing that, however the receipts at the treasury may

fail in the course of the year, at the end of that time he will be able to indemnify himself from another source. It is a property of human nature soon to relax when not impelled by personal advantage or disadvantage.

Menander

I know no one, after Sophocles, whom I love so well. He is thoroughly pure, noble, great, and cheerful, and his grace is inimitable. It is certainly to be lamented that we possess so little of him, but that little is invaluable, and highly instructive to gifted men.

Calderon

The great point is that he from whom we would learn should be congenial to our nature. Now, Calderon, for instance, great as he is, and much as I admire him, has exerted no influence over me for good or for ill. But he would have been dangerous to Schiller—he would have led him astray; and hence it is fortunate that Calderon was not generally known in Germany till after Schiller's death. Calderon is infinitely great in the technical and theatrical; Schiller, on the contrary, far more sound, earnest, and great in his intention, and it would have been a pity if he had lost any of these virtues, without, after all, attaining the greatness of Calderon in other respects.

Molière

Molière is so great that one is astonished anew every time one reads him. He is a man by himself—his pieces border on tragedy; they are apprehensive; and no one

has the courage to imitate them. His *Miser*, where the vice destroys all the natural piety between father and son, is especially great, and in a high sense tragic. But when, in a German paraphrase, the son is changed into a relation, the whole is weakened, and loses its significance. They feared to show the vice in its true nature, as he did; but what is tragic there, or indeed anywhere, except what is intolerable?

I read some pieces of Molière's every year, just as, from time to time, I contemplate the engravings after the great Italian masters. For we little men are not able to retain the greatness of such things within ourselves; we must therefore return to them from time to time, and renew our impressions.

If we, for our modern purposes, wish to learn how to conduct ourselves upon the theatre, Molière is the man to whom we should apply.

Do you know his *Malade Imaginaire?* There is a scene in it which, as often as I read the piece, appears to me the symbol of a perfect knowledge of the boards. I mean the scene where the "malade imaginaire" asks his little daughter Louison if there has not been a young man in the chamber of her eldest sister.

Now, any other who did not understand his craft so well would have let the little Louison plainly tell the fact at once, and there would have been the end of the matter.

But what various motives for delay are introduced by Molière into this examination, for the sake of life and effect. He first makes the little Louison act as if she did not understand her father; then she denies that she knows anything; then, threatened with the rod, she falls

down as if dead; then, when her father bursts out in despair, she springs up from her feigned swoon with roguish hilarity, and at last, little by little, she confesses all.

My explanation can only give you a very meagre notion of the animation of the scene; but read this scene yourself till you become thoroughly impressed with its theatrical worth, and you will confess that there is more practical instruction contained in it than in all the theories in the world.

I have known and loved Molière from my youth, and have learned from him during my whole life. I never fail to read some of his plays every year, that I may keep up a constant intercourse with what is excellent. It is not merely the perfectly artistic treatment which delights me; but particularly the amiable nature, the highly-formed mind, of the poet. There is in him a grace and a feeling for the decorous, and a tone of good society, which his innate beautiful nature could only attain by daily intercourse with the most eminent men of his age. Of Menander, I only know the few fragments; but these give me so high an idea of him that I look upon this great Greek as the only man who could be compared to Molière.

Shakespeare

We cannot talk about Shakespeare; everything is inadequate. I have touched upon the subject in my *Wilhelm Meister*, but that is not saying much. He is not a theatrical poet; he never thought of the stage; it was far too narrow for his great mind: nay, the whole visible world was too narrow.

He is even too rich and too powerful. A productive nature ought not to read more than one of his dramas in a year if it would not be wrecked entirely. I did well to get rid of him by writing *Goetz* and *Egmont*, and Byron did well by not having too much respect and admiration for him, but going his own way. How many excellent Germans have been ruined by him and Calderon!

Shakespeare gives us golden apples in silver dishes. We get, indeed, the silver dishes by studying his works; but, unfortunately, we have only potatoes to put into them.

Macbeth is Shakespeare's best acting play, the one in which he shows most understanding with respect to the stage. But would you see his mind unfettered, read *Troilus and Cressida*, where he treats the materials of the *Iliad* in his own fashion.

A. W. Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature

It is not to be denied that Schlegel knows a great deal, and one is almost terrified at his extraordinary attainments and his extensive reading. But this is not enough. Learning in itself does not constitute judgment. His criticism is completely one-sided, because in all theatrical pieces he merely regards the skeleton of the plot and arrangement, and only points out small points of resemblance to great predecessors, without troubling himself in the least as to what the author brings forward of graceful life and the culture of a high soul. But of what use are all the arts of genius,

if we do not find in a theatrical piece an amiable or great personality of the author? This alone influences the cultivation of the people.

I look upon the manner in which Schlegel has treated the French drama as a sort of recipe for the formation of a bad critic, who is wanting in every organ for the veneration of excellence, and who passes over an able personality and a great character as if they were chaff and stubble.

The French Romanticists

Extremes are never to be avoided in any revolution. In a political one nothing is generally desired in the beginning but the abolition of abuses; but before people are aware, they are deep in bloodshed and horror. Thus the French, in their present literary revolution, desired nothing at first but a freer form; however, they will not stop there, but will reject the traditional contents together with the form. They begin to declare the representation of noble sentiments and deeds as tedious, and attempt to treat of all sorts of abominations. Instead of the beautiful subjects from Grecian mythology, there are devils, witches, and vampires, and the lofty heroes of antiquity must give place to jugglers and galley slaves. This is piquant! This is effective! But after the public has once tasted this highly seasoned food, and has become accustomed to it, it will always long for more, and that stronger. A young man of talent, who would produce an effect and be acknowledged, and who is great enough to go his own way, must accommodate himself to the taste of the day—nay, must seek to outdo his predecessors in the horrible and frightful. But in this chase after outward means

of effect, all profound study, and all gradual and thorough development of the talent and the man from within, is entirely neglected. And this is the greatest injury which can befall a talent, although literature in general will gain by this tendency of the moment.

The extremes and excrescences which I have described will gradually disappear; but this great advantage will finally remain—besides a freer form, richer and more diversified subjects will have been attained, and no object of the broadest world and the most manifold life will be any longer excluded as unpoetical. I compare the present literary epoch to a state of violent fever, which is not in itself good and desirable, but of which improved health is the happy consequence. That abomination which now often constitutes the whole subject of a poetical work will in future only appear as a useful expedient; aye, the pure and the noble, which is now abandoned for the moment, will soon be resought with additional ardor.

Mérimée has treated these things very differently from his fellow-authors. These poems, it is true, are not deficient in various horrible motifs, such as churchyards, nocturnal crossroads, ghosts and vampires; but the repulsive themes do not touch the intrinsic merit of the poet. On the contrary, he treats them from a certain objective distance, and, as it were, with irony. He goes to work with them like an artist, to whom it is an amusement to try anything of the sort. He has, as I have said before, quite renounced himself, nay, he has even renounced the Frenchman, and that to such a degree that at first these poems of Guzla were deemed real Illyrian popular poems, and thus little was wanting for the success of the imposition he had intended.

Mérimée, to be sure, is a splendid fellow! Indeed, more power and genius are generally required for the objective treatment of a subject than is supposed. So Lord Byron, also, notwithstanding his predominant personality, has sometimes had the power of renouncing himself altogether, as may be seen in some of his dramatic pieces, particularly in his *Marino Faliero*. In this piece one quite forgets that Lord Byron, or even an Englishman, wrote it. We live entirely in Venice, and entirely in the time in which the action takes place. The personages speak quite from themselves, and from their own condition, without having any of the subjective feelings, thoughts, and opinions of the poet. That is as it should be. Of our young French romantic writers of the exaggerating sort, one cannot say as much. What I have read of them—poems, novels, dramatic works—have all borne the personal coloring of the author, and none of them ever make me forget that a Parisian—that a Frenchman—wrote them. Even in the treatment of foreign subjects one still remains in France and Paris, quite absorbed in all the wishes, necessities, conflicts, and fermentations of the present day.

Victor Hugo

He has a fine talent, but quite entangled in the unhappy romantic tendency of his time, by which he is seduced to represent, together with what is beautiful, also that which is most insupportable and hideous. I have lately been reading his *Notre Dame de Paris*, and required no little patience to support the horror with which this reading has inspired me. It is the most

abominable book that ever was written! Besides, one is not even indemnified for the torture one has to endure by the pleasure one might receive from a truthful representation of human nature or human character. His book is, on the contrary, utterly destitute of nature and truth! The so-called characters whom he brings forward are not human beings with living flesh and blood, but miserable wooden puppets, which he deals with as he pleases, and which he causes to make all sorts of contortions and grimaces just as he needs them for his desired effects. But what an age it must be which not only renders such a book possible and calls it into existence, but even finds it endurable and delightful.

The "Idea" of Goethe's Tasso and Faust

Idea! as if I knew anything about it. I had the life of Tasso, I had my own life; and whilst I brought together two odd figures with their peculiarities, the image of Tasso arose in my mind, to which I opposed, as a prosaic contrast, that of Antonio, for whom also I did not lack models. The further particulars of court life and love affairs were at Weimar as they were in Ferrara; and I can truly say of my production, *it is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh.*

The Germans are, certainly, strange people. By their deep thoughts and ideas, which they seek in everything and fix upon everything, they make life much more burdensome than is necessary. Only have the courage to give yourself up to your impressions, allow yourself to be delighted, moved, elevated, nay, instructed and inspired for something great; but do not imagine all is vanity, if it is not abstract thought and idea.

Then they come and ask what idea I meant to embody in my *Faust*. As if I knew myself and could inform them. *From heaven, through the world, to hell*, would indeed be something; but this is no idea, only a course of action. And further, that the devil loses the wager, and that a man, continually struggling from difficult errors towards something better, should be redeemed, is an effective, and to many, a good enlightening thought; but it is no idea which lies at the foundation of the whole and of every individual scene. It would have been a fine thing, indeed, if I had strung so rich, varied, and highly diversified a life as I have brought to view in *Faust* upon the slender string of one pervading idea.

It was, on the whole, not in my line, as a poet, to strive to embody anything *abstract*. I received in my mind *impressions*, and those of a sensuous, animated, charming, varied, hundredfold kind, just as a lively imagination presented them; and I had, as a poet, nothing more to do than artistically to round off and elaborate such views and impressions, and by means of a lively representation so to bring them forward that others might receive the same impression in hearing or reading my representation of them.

If I however wished, as a poet, to represent any idea, I did it in short poems, where a decided unity could prevail, as, for instance, in the *Metamorphosis of Animals*, that of *Plants*, the poem *Legacy*, and many others. The only production of greater extent, in which I am conscious of having labored to set forth a pervading idea, is probably my *Elective Affinities*. This novel has thus become comprehensible to the intellect; but I will not say that it is therefore better. I am

rather of the opinion that the more incommensurable, and the more incomprehensible to the intellect, a poetic production is, so much the better it is.

Schiller

Yes, everything else about him was proud and majestic, only the eyes were soft. And his talent was like his outward form. He seized boldly on a great subject, and turned it this way and that, and handled it this way and that. But he saw his object, as it were, only from the outside; a quiet development from within was not his province. His talent was desultory. Thus he was never decided—could never have done. He often changed a part just before a rehearsal.

And, as he went so boldly to work, he did not take sufficient pains about *motives*. I recollect what trouble I had with him when he wanted to make Gessler, in *Tell*, abruptly break an apple from the tree, and have it shot from the boy's head. This was quite against my nature, and I urged him to give at least some motive to this barbarity, by making the boy boast to Gessler of his father's dexterity, and say that he could shoot an apple from a tree at a hundred paces. Schiller, at first, would have nothing of the sort: but at last he yielded to my arguments and intentions, and did as I advised him. I, on the other hand, by too great attention to *motives*, kept my pieces from the theatre. My *Eugenie* is nothing but a chain of *motives*, and this cannot succeed on the stage.

Schiller's genius was really made for the theatre. With every piece he progressed, and became more finished; but, strange to say, a certain love for the hor-

rible adhered to him from the time of the *Robbers*, which never quite left him even in his prime. I still recollect perfectly well that in the prison scene in my *Egmont*, where the sentence is read to him, Schiller would have made Alva appear in the background, masked and muffled in a cloak, enjoying the effect which the sentence would produce on Egmont. Thus Alva was to show himself insatiable in revenge and malice. I, however, protested, and prevented the apparition. He was a singular, great man.

Every week he became different and more finished; each time that I saw him he seemed to me to have advanced in learning and judgment. His letters are the fairest memorials of him which I possess, and they are also among the most excellent of his writings.

Edinburgh Review

It is a pleasure to me to see the elevation and excellence to which the English critics now rise. There is not a trace of their former pedantry, but its place is occupied by great qualities. In the last article—the one on German literature—you will find the following remark:—"There are some poets who have a tendency always to occupy themselves with things which another likes to drive from his mind." What say you to this? There we know at once where we are, and how we have to classify a great number of our most modern literati.

Byron

Lord Byron is to be regarded as a man, as an Englishman, and as a great genius. His good qualities

belong chiefly to the man, his bad to the Englishman and the peer, his talent is incommensurable.

All Englishmen, as such, are without reflection, properly so called; distractions and party spirit will not permit them to perfect themselves in quiet. But they are great as practical men.

Thus Lord Byron could never attain reflection concerning himself, and on this account his maxims in general are not successful, as is shown by his creed, "much money and no authority," for much money always paralyzes authority.

But where he creates he always succeeds; and we may truly say that with him inspiration supplies the place of reflection. Something within him ever drove him to poetry, and then everything that came from the man, especially from his heart, was excellent. He produced his best things, as women do pretty children, without thinking about it or knowing how it was done.

He is a great talent, a born talent, and I never saw the true poetical power greater in any man than in him. In the apprehension of external objects, and a clear penetration into past situations, he is quite as great as Shakespeare. But as a pure individuality, Shakespeare is his superior. This was felt by Byron, and on this account he does not say much of Shakespeare, although he knows whole passages by heart. He would willingly have denied him altogether; for Shakespeare's serenity is in his way, and he feels that he is no match for it. Pope he does not deny, for he had no cause to fear him. On the contrary, he mentions him, and shows him respect when he can, for he knows well enough that Pope is a mere foil to himself.

His high rank as an English peer was very injurious to Byron; for every talent is oppressed by the outer world,—how much more, then, when there is such high birth and so great a fortune. A certain middle rank is much more favorable to talent, on which account we find all great artists and poets in the middle classes. Byron's predilection for the unbounded could not have been nearly so dangerous with more humble birth and smaller means. But as it was, he was able to put every fancy into practice, and this involved him in innumerable scrapes. Besides, how could one of such high rank be inspired with awe and respect by any rank whatever? He expressed whatever he felt, and this brought him into ceaseless conflict with the world.

Moreover, his perpetual negation and fault-finding is injurious even to his excellent works. For not only does the discontent of the poet infect the reader, but the end of all opposition is negation; and negation is nothing. If I call *bad* bad, what do I gain? But if I call *good* bad, I do a great deal of mischief. He who will work aright must never rail, must not trouble himself at all about what is ill done, but only strive to do well himself. For the great point is not to pull down, but to build up, and in this humanity finds pure joy.

I could not make use of any man as the representative of the modern poetical era except him, who undoubtedly is to be regarded as the greatest genius of our century. Byron is neither antique nor romantic, but like the present day itself. This was the sort of man I required. Then he suited me on account of his unsatis-

fied nature and his warlike tendency, which led to his death at Missolonghi.

Lord Byron is only great as a poet; as soon as he reflects, he is a child.

Scott

Walter Scott's *Fair Maid of Perth* is excellent, is it not? There is finish! there is a hand! What a firm foundation for the whole, and in particular not a touch which does not lead to the goal! Then, what details of dialogue and description, both of which are excellent. His scenes and situations are like pictures by Teniers; in the arrangement they show the summit of art, the individual figures have a speaking truth, and the execution is extended with artistic love to the minutest details, so that not a stroke is lost.

You find everywhere in Walter Scott a remarkable security and thoroughness in his delineation, which proceeds from his comprehensive knowledge of the real world, obtained by life-long studies and observations, and a daily discussion of the most important relations. Then come his great talent and his comprehensive nature. You remember the English critic who compares the poets to the voices of singers, of which some can command only a few fine tones, while others have the whole compass, from the highest to the lowest, completely in their power. Walter Scott is one of this last sort. In the *Fair Maid of Perth* you will not find a single weak passage to make you feel as if his knowledge and talent were insufficient. He is equal to his subject in every direction in which it takes him; the

king, the royal brother, the prince, the head of the clergy, the nobles, the magistracy, the citizens and mechanics, the Highlanders, are all drawn with the same sure hand, and hit off with equal truth.

The passage where the prince, sitting on horseback, makes the pretty minstrel girl step upon his foot, that he may raise her up for a kiss, is in the boldest English style. But you ladies are wrong always to take sides. Usually, you read a book to find nutrition for the heart, to find a hero whom you could love. This is not the way to read; the great point is not whether this or that character pleases, but whether the whole book pleases.

But, when you have finished the *Fair Maid of Perth*, you must at once read *Waverly*, which is written from quite a different point of view, but which may, without hesitation, be set beside the best works that have ever been written in this world. We see that it is the same man who wrote the *Fair Maid of Perth*, but that he has yet to gain the favor of the public, and therefore collects his forces so that he may not give a touch that is short of excellence. The *Fair Maid of Perth*, on the other hand, is from a freer pen; the author is now sure of his public, and he proceeds more at liberty. After reading *Waverley*, you will understand why Walter Scott still designates himself the author of that work; for there he showed what he could do, and he has never since written anything to surpass, or even equal, that first published novel.

Walter Scott is a great genius; he has not his equal; and we need not wonder at the extraordinary effect he produces on the whole reading world. He gives me

much to think of; and I discover in him a wholly new art, with laws of its own.

We read far too many poor things, thus losing time, and gaining nothing. We should only read what we admire, as I did in my youth, and as I now experience with Sir Walter Scott. I have just begun *Rob Roy*, and will read his best novels in succession. All is great —material, import, characters, execution; and then what infinite diligence in the preparatory studies! what truth of detail in the execution! We see, too, what English history is; and what a thing it is when such an inheritance falls to the lot of a clever poet. Our German history, in five volumes, is, on the other hand, sheer poverty.

It is a peculiarity of Walter Scott's that his great talent in representing details often leads him into faults. Thus, in *Ivanhoe*, there is a scene where they are seated at a table in a castle-hall at night, and a stranger enters. Now, he is quite right in describing the stranger's appearance and dress, but it is a fault that he goes to the length of describing his feet, shoes, and stockings. When we sit down in the evening, and some one comes in, we see only the upper part of his body. If I describe the feet, daylight enters at once, and the scene loses its nocturnal character.

APPENDIX

I. On the Selection and Translation of the Essays in this Volume.

II. On the Chronology of Goethe's Critical Studies.

APPENDIX

I. *On the Selection and Translation of the Essays in this Volume*

This book was first suggested to me in 1909, and was virtually completed seven or eight years ago; but the manuscript was mislaid among some old papers, and when it was recovered the European War was at its height. Never again, it then seemed, could I regard my work with the same disinterested temper in which it was begun, for what was recovered was no longer a manuscript but a ghost, no longer a book but a strange spirit returned from an all too irrecoverable past. When I re-read these words from the lips of one who had spent his life " with spirits god-like mild," and related them to our new and altered world, I understood once more how man forever fashions history to his own meaning, and how it has no life except such as is given to it by his creative mind. Every word I now read assumed a new and heightened significance, a more intimate relation with life; and every word was a call to sympathy and understanding,—the word of a man who had withheld all hate from enemy France, had praised England and its literature, had analyzed the defects of his own countrymen, and had made constant denial of the compatability of poetry and partisanship. How could I approach work of this kind in the spirit of the fiery national partisan, not to mention that of the mere dryasdust scholar, when every word Goethe uttered shed light and meaning on the warm life about me, and every accent of his voice taught a high forebearance? So when on sick-leave from my regiment at the very end of 1917, to while away the tediousness of convalescence, I

played once more with the work begun in the old days when I was still able to live in "the wise man's only country, Life"; and before I sailed for France, leaving behind me the manuscript as it here stands, I determined that if it were ever published, I should add nothing in the form of preface, introduction, or critical apparatus, but allow Goethe to speak for himself to such hearts as could hear and understand him. Some readers may find a key to that understanding if they begin with the famous passage on "Poetry and Patriotism" on page 251.

No adequate estimate of Goethe's critical work has yet been achieved; and the sensible but unilluminating chapter on this subject in the late Calvin Thomas's *Goethe* is not much more disappointing than the more extended studies in German of Oskar Walzel and Wilhelm Bode. For a complete estimate of Goethe as a critic we should have to ransack all his essays and reviews, his novels and poems, his autobiography and his journals, his letters and conversations, for in all of them he has scattered judgments on books and thoughts on the theory of art. It would almost seem as if his reputation as a critic rests more securely on these casual utterances than on his formal essays and studies. There more than elsewhere Sainte-Beauve and Matthew Arnold recognized "the supreme critic"; there above all we find that mellow wisdom which we have come to associate with Goethe's name.

In this little volume, however, we have most of Goethe's successive moods represented by some characteristic utterance,—the young reviewer, the lover of Shakespeare and Gothic art, rebelling against schools and rules but most of all against dullness and formality; the contributor to Wieland's *German Mercury,* the collaborator of Schiller in the *Horen* and in an exchange of letters of incomparable interest, after the life of Weimar and the journey to Italy had mellowed his talents; the student of art and æsthetics in the *Propyläen,* championing the antique spirit and voicing

a protest against the excesses of romanticism; the more thoughtful but still sympathetic student of Shakespeare, enthusiastic in *Wilhelm Meister,* more temperate in *Shakespeare ad Infinitum;* the mature reviewer, welcoming the publication of old German and foreign folksongs, and hailing in turn Byron, Manzoni, Carlyle, Niebuhr, and all the young French and German writers of his day; and finally, the literary dictator in his old age, as shown in the careless and incessant wisdom of his recorded conversation. We have here, it is true, a very small part of his extraordinary output, but quite enough to form a just judgment of his place among the great critics. In a career so extended and a mind so active and all-embracing we must expect to find inconsistencies and errors of judgment. Some of the ideas in this volume have only an historical interest; a perverse mind might indeed garner from it an anthology of critical errors. It was not these which won for him from so many the title of "supreme critic," but rather the sanity, insight, and impartiality of his mind and his extraordinary gift for foreseeing the direction of critical thought.

All of the selections in Part I, except the essay on "German Architecture," have been taken from Goethe's *Essays on Art,* translated by S. G. Ward (Boston, 1845). Wilhelm Meister's critique of *Hamlet* has been excerpted from Carlyle's rendering of *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre.* The version of John Oxenford has been used for the selections from the *Conversations with Eckermann,* and Oxenford's version, as revised by Miss M. S. Smith, for the selection from Goethe's *Autobiography.* The remaining essays were translated by the late Randolph S. Bourne, by Professor F. W. J. Heuser, and by myself. I am indebted to Mr. Bourne for translating the following essays: "On German Architecture," "Shakespeare ad Infinitum," "The First Edition of *Hamlet,*" "*Troilus and Cressida,*" "The Methods of French Criticism," "Supplement to Aristotle's *Poetics,*" "Tieck's Dramaturgic Fragments," "On the Ger-

man Theatre," "Didactic Poetry," "Superstition and Poetry," "The Theory of a World Literature," "Byron's *Manfred*," "Byron's *Don Juan*," "Calderon's *Daughter of the Air*," "Molière's *Misanthrope*," "Folksongs again Commended," and "Laurence Sterne." Professor Heuser has translated the following: "The Production of a National Classic," "Epic and Dramatic Poetry," and "English Reviewers." I have made material changes and corrections in almost all the translations, but on the whole each translator should be held responsible for the accuracy and style of his own work. For the selection and arrangement of the material, and for the titles given to some of the excerpts, I am alone responsible.

Some of Goethe's judgments on books, and his maxims on life and art, have already appeared in volumes of selections in English translation; but no other work in any language, so far as I am aware, attempts to include in a single volume the whole range of Goethe's critical and æsthetic studies. Some of the selections have never before appeared in English.

J. E. S.

Troutbeck, May, 1919.

Since the above was written, I have become greatly indebted to Lord Haldane for contributing the Foreword, and especially to Professor Friedrich Bruns for reading the proofsheets and revising some of the translations. Miss L. Bonino has prepared the Index. J. E. S.

New York, September, 1921.

II. *On the Chronology of Goethe's Critical Studies*

The following chronology of Goethe's critical activity is intended chiefly to indicate the original sources of the selections in the present volume.

1772-73. Reviews in the *Frankfurter gelehrten Anzeigen:*
Goethe as a Young Reviewer (reviews of Blum's *Lyrische Gedichte,* and Sulzer's *Cymbelline, ein Trauerspiel, nach einem von Shakespeare erfundnen Stoffe,* both translated in full).

1773. *Von deutscher Baukunst:*
On German Architecture (complete translation).

1788 sq. Articles in Wieland's *Teutscher Merkur:*
Simple Imitation of Nature, Manner, Style (*Über Italien: Einfache Nachahmung der Natur, Manier, Stil,* complete translation).

1794-1805. Correspondence of Goethe and Schiller:
Epic and Dramatic Poetry (complete translation); also footnote on page 104.

1795-96. *Wilhelm Meister's Lehrjahre:*
Wilhelm Meister's Critique of *Hamlet.*

1795-97. Articles in *Die Horen:*
The Production of a National Classic (*Literarischer Sansculottismus,* complete translation except for four introductory paragraphs).

1798-1800. Articles in *Die Propyläen:*
Introduction to the Propylaea.
On Laocoon (complete translation).
On Truth and Probability in Works of Art (complete translation).
The Collector and his Friends.
Notes on Dillettantism. (By Goethe and Schiller).

1804 sq. Reviews in the *Jenaische Allgemeine Literaturzeitung:*

Old German Folksongs (review of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn,* translated in full except that only a few of Goethe's characterizations of individual poems are included).

1811-14. *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (Autobiography):

German Literature in Goethe's Youth (selected passages from part ii, book 7); also footnote on page 14 (from part ii, book 10).

1815 sq. Articles in the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände:*

Shakespeare ad Infinitum, parts i-ii, written 1813 (*Shakespeare und kein Ende,* complete translation).

On the German Theatre (complete translation).

1816-32. Articles in *Über Kunst und Alterthum:*

Ancient and Modern.

The Theory of a World Literature, part i (review of Duval's *Le Tasse*), part ii (*Bezüge nach Aussen,* complete translation), part iii (*Edinburgh Reviews*), part v (review of Carlyle's *Leben Schillers*).

Supplement to Aristotle's *Poetics* (complete translation).

On Didactic Poetry (complete translation).

Superstition and Poetry (*Justus Möser*).

The Methods of French Critics (*Urteilsworte französischer Kritiker,* complete translation).

On Criticism, § 1 (review of Manzoni's *Carmagnola*), § 3 (review of Rochlitz's *Für Freunde der Tonkunst*).

The First Edition of *Hamlet* (complete translation).

Byron's *Manfred* (complete translation).

Byron's *Don Juan* (complete translation).

Calderon's *Daughter of the Air* (complete translation).

Molière's *Misanthrope* (review of Taschereau's *Histoire de la Vie et des Ouvrages de Molière,* complete translation).

Shakespeare ad Infinitum, part iii, written 1816, published 1826 (complete translation).

Folksongs again Commended (complete translation).

Laurence Sterne (complete translation).

The English Reviewers (review of Manzoni's *Carmagnola*).

1822-32. *Gespräche mit Goethe in den letzten Jahren seines Lebens,* by J. P. Eckermann (published 1836-48):

Extracts from Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann.

Posthumous Works (*Nachgelassene Werke,* 1833):

Tieck's Dramaturgic Fragments (complete translation).

Troilus and Cressida (*Über die Parodie bei den Alten*).

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